Imprimatur,

Tho. Tomkyns R. R^mo. in Christo Patri ac Domino D^no. GILBERTO *Divinâ Providentiâ Archi-Episcopo Cantuariensi à Sacris Domesticis.*

Ex Æd. Lamb. Festo S^ti Andreæ, 1667.

Line.
8° C. 161.

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DEUS JUSTIFICATUS:

OR,

The Divine Goodneſs

Vindicated and Cleared,

againſt the Aſſertors of

Abſolute and *Inconditionate*

REPROBATION.

TOGETHER WITH

Some Reflections on a late Diſcourſe of Mr. *Parkers*, concerning the

Divine Dominion and *Goodneſs.*

Ἀγαθὸς ἦν τὸ πᾶν πᾶσι ὁ συνιστὰς, ἀγαθῷ δὴ οὐδεὶς οὐδὲ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὢν πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ. Plato.

WISD. xi. 23.

For thou loveſt all the things that are, and abhorreſt nothing which thou haſt made; for never wouldeſt thou have made any thing, if thou hadſt hated it.

LONDON:

Printed by *E. Cotes*, for *Walter Kettilby* at the *Biſhops-head* in *Duck-lane*, 1668.

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

IT *cannot be unknown to any man who hath either carefully obſerved the manners of Mankind, or peruſed the Writings of thoſe of this preſent Age, who have made many ſad Declarations againſt the general Corruption of the World; that either men are ſtupidly and blockiſhly Ignorant, even in theſe dayes wherein Knowledge ſo much abounds;* or their Leaders have cauſed them to Err, *by inſtilling into them ſuch Principles, as may fairly conſiſt with the practice of Vice and Immorality; which eaſing them of that tedious burden of ſevere Mortification, and ſharpe Conflicts with the irregular and inordinate motions of ſenſe and the bodily life; ſoon captivated them to the embracing of*

them, and made a ſpeedy conqueſt of their unwary Judgments; and ſo infinitely prejudiced their minds againſt the reception of better Sentiments and Notions, that they cannot believe either the ſenſe of the moſt pious and venerable Antiquity, or of our own preſent Church to be Orthodox. And I wiſh I could ſay that this latter hath not been the greater cauſe of thoſe monſtrous Impieties, which in theſe late times ſo much prevailed amongſt us; For certainly, mens natural Faculties and Capacities, are no whit worſe for the entertaining of Truth, if it were rightly and duely propounded to them, than former ages: but might be much better, if every Preacher of the Goſpel, and Steward of the Myſteries of God, had faithfully diſcharged the truſt committed to him. But when thoſe that took upon them the title of Evangelical Shepherds, *came not in at the right door, but impudently challenged and uſurped that Sacred Office and Dignity, of being Co-workers with Chriſt the chief Shepherd, in that great work of implanting his own life and lovely Nature in the lapſed and degenerate ſouls of men, it is no wonder if the Flock went aſtray, and became faint and weak through the unwholeſomeneſs or undue order and proportion of their food. And doubtleſs the bleſſed Jeſus who came into the World to heal and cement the broken ruins*

and

and decayes of our Natures, did not intend to bring this Heroick undertaking to perfection by perpetual Miracles, but by a natural and orderly Method; and therefore, as he himſelf, before he left the World, breathed on his Apoſtles, and gave them Commiſſion both to Teach and Govern his Church: So did they (having received Authority from the Prince and Head of the Catholick Church, the Lord Chriſt) Ordain and Conſtitute fit perſons to ſucceed them in that Function; by which we are ſufficiently inſtructed, that it is not for every man to take upon him the Office of a Miniſter of the Goſpel, leſt God take as little delight in him, as he did in thoſe Prophets of old, who run before they were ſent, (which too many did in the late times, upon the pretence of ſome inſpired Excellency and Perfection above their Brethren) but only for thoſe that come into their Office by a regular and due manner, and according to the Fundamental Laws, and Apoſtolick Conſtitutions of the Church wherein they live. I may therefore refer the Miſcarriages obſerved amongſt us, to theſe two General Heads.

1. *The great Pride and Self-conceitedneſs which reigns in vulgar ſpirits, whereby they make their vainglorious Minds the eſtimate of their Perfections, and by puffie conceits of themſelves, crumble into infinite Sects and*

Diviſions, and he that can beſt act the part of an inſpired perſon, and cant moſt fluently in Scripture expreſſions, becomes the Ringleader of the Sect. And what gives greater occaſion to this, then that pleaſant Doctrin to carnal minds, which teaches them, that when they can but collect themſelves to be heirs of heaven, and fancy their names enrolled among the Stars, they are then ſafe enough; They ſhall tread upon the young Lyon and the Dragon, and the enemy ſhall never be able to move or diſturbe their reſt. And all this ſhall be conferr'd upon them without any attempts or endeavours of their own toward the attainment of it: This cannot but fill their ſailes, and blow up their light heads, when they conſider how eaſily they have obtained heaven, and how God himſelf by a peculiar and diſcriminating love hath ſeparated them from the reſt of the polluted rabble of mankinde, and dignified them with the title of his Beloved Ones. *And (as the Nature of every Hereſie is to diffuſe and ſpread it ſelf, and by a contagious affriction, ſavour all capable Subjects round about it: no ſooner is this Doctrine propounded, but it findes good entertainment by the unſtable and injudicious; becauſe it complies with, and patronizes their darling Vices, and renders it ſelf very grateful to the Animal Life; and withal requires*

no

no great pains or labour to be fully inſtructed in it; nothing that ſhall rouze them up from their deadly ſlumber, or moleſt their deſired ſecurity; the whole buſineſs is nothing but an inactive and eaſie belief of certain propoſitions, and a delightſome application of them to themſelves; and then Heaven cannot fail of being their portion, and reward. Thus while they ſoar aloft, and fly in their vain dreams and imaginations, they are really ſuckt into a living Hell of woe and miſery: and the unrighteous nature, whoſe counſels are the very inſpirations of that bottomleſs-pit, takes greater hold upon them; and having no ſubſtantial foundation to bottom themſelves upon, they periſh in a ſtorm, and the windes of adverſe fortune ſink them, even when they think themſelves in the haven of Felicity. True goodneſs and righteouſneſs cannot conſiſt with a proud and haughty ſpirit, and is neuer found but in that humble Temper which the Bleſſed Jeſus recommended to all his followers, when he ſaid, Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of heart. *And certainly 'tis the greateſt* Obex, *and impediment to real and ſolid wiſdom that poſſibly can be imagined, when we are impatient of inſtruction, and refuſe ſuch wholeſome precepts and counſels, as tend to the building of us up in our moſt holy Faith; and by high-flown imaginations climb to the*

higheſt

higheſt boughs of the tree of knowledge, when we are yet unacquainted with the Rudiments of Chriſtianity. The way to life and bleſſedneſs lies not in the ſelf-choſen tracts of opinions, nor in ſequeſtring our ſelves from the reſt of the world by an impertinent contention about words and names; things of no value or concern in compariſon of thoſe momentous and great aims of Religion in perfecting the ſoul in Juſtice, Righteouſneſs, and Goodneſs; theſe only will give free acceſs to Heaven, when the nice ſpeculations of curious Wits, devoid of purity and innocency, whiter then the light and ſnow, are not able to waft the ſoul over the perturbed caſualties and adverſe occurrences which are the genuine productions of this inferior region of Mutability. God is not taken with ſhadows of Holineſs, nor pleaſed with Enthuſiaſtick heats, and Paroxyſms of furious zeal: but with thoſe mild and gentle motions, which are begotten and raiſed up by that internal Veſtal fire, that perpetually burns bright within it's own Orbe, and ſpends it's Celeſtial vigor and activity, either in the conſumption or converſion into it's own nature, of whatever is ſtubborn and inobſequious to thoſe laws which are the foundation of it's being; and thus amplifies and enlarges it's dominion by the new acceſſion of ſuperadvenient forces from it's now-conquered enemies. The

true

true Christian descends not so low, as to make himself a party against any one (be he of what Judgment or Opinion he will in matters of speculation and lubricous uncertainty) who sincerely follows the dictates of his great Lord and Master, whose Birth was usher'd in with an Anthem of Peace and Goodwil amongst men, sung by an Angelick Quire, and his life spent in diffusions of Charity, and in uniting the hearts of all mankind to the first and ever-blessed Author of all things. The first cause of evil to the sons of men was, τὸ βαλλόμενον ἑαυτῷ κακὸν, That they would be their own, or themselves, *as the Philosopher speaks: And now that we are Inhabitants of the earth, those wrinkles which we contracted from the aged and polluted brow of* Adam, *shew themselves; and every man looks upon himself as a particular being, divided and separated from the rest of the World, and sent hither to manage and carry on the cause of self-interest; and being thus principled, hates all instruction to the contrary, and scorns to be reformed: And through this excessive* Fastus *and swelling pride, the great fomentors of Debates and Contentions, the whole Earth is over-run with Cruelty and Barbarity; For, from whence come Wars and Bloodshed, but from that unquiet and turbulent spirit which cannot rest within it's*

own Sphear; but by tumultuous and giddy motions, ſhakes the Peace and Tranquillity of all round about it? Thoſe wounds which this Nation not long ago received in her body Politick, the ſcars of which are not worn out to this day, are too ſad and ſure an evidence of thoſe direful effects which Pride and Ambition produce; eſpecially when cheriſhed by affected Knowledge, and the unruly and rapacious flames of miſtaken Zeal. And when the unerring and Allcomprehenſive Providence of God, which rules and governs the affairs of this inferiour World, was pleaſed to permit the pride and malice of prophane and immoral perſons, to ariſe to that hight of impiety and brutiſhneſs, as, in defiance of heaven, in deſpight of the loud clamours of their own conſciences, and without any ſenſe or regard to the common intereſt and Good of the Nation, whereof themſelves made an unworthy part, to take away by wicked hands the life of our late Gratious Sovereign, *thereby drawing a mask and veil over the beautious face of our Church; which like the* Heliotrope, *muſt needs cloſe up her leaves in penſiveneſs and ſorrow, when the Sun that cheared and enlivened her by his kindly influence, was ſet and withdrawn from our Horizon; then, I ſay, did Wickedneſs and Irreligion, deluge and overſpread the whole*

body

body Politick, like the wild Ocean breaking through it's antient bounds, and with a foaming rage ſwallowing up whole regions at once: and indeed little elſe could be expected when once the walls and banks, which reſtrained and curb'd it's luxuriant pride, were overturned and broken down: Then was Monarchy ſtigmatiz'd with the infamous title of Tyranny, and Epiſcopacy (which excellent and well-temper'd Conſtitution, both Reaſon and Scripture averr to be Apoſtolical) ſtyled Antichriſtianiſm, and new-model'd Popery; and thoſe, who out of a ſenſe of faith and obedience to God, and generous Loyalty and Allegiance to their Prince, could not comply with thoſe impious Deſigns, and unchriſtian Projects then ſet on foot, were accounted Schiſmaticks and Diſſenters from the publick intereſt: And what was it gave birth to theſe tragick Scenes of ſorrow and diſorder, but only the reſtleſs and unſtable ſpirits of injudicious perſons, who being puffed up with aſpiring thoughts, and the fantaſtick images of Glory and Ambition, caſt an envious eye upon every tranſaction, whether in Church or State, that did not compromiſe with their intereſt, and ſuit with the ill-contrivances of things their buſie minds had been working out? And that the Goſpel which carries Peace in it's forefront, and owns no other Parent but the Prince of Peace, all

whoſe

whose productions are like himself, should be made to give an alarm of Rebellion and War, is the most audacious piece of treachery to God, and uncharitableness to Men, in the World; as if God were more pleased with the title of the Lord of Hosts, *then in being styled the* Father of Mercies, *order and consolation throughout the earth. Surely, he that once said,* By me Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice, *did likewise command, to be subject to them, and honor them; as being accountable to him alone, for the management of the trust committed to them. And it cannot be a greater reproach and scandal, to that peaceable Religion we profess, then to see those that own it, and seem to contend most for it, to be such ill practitioners of those plain Precepts of Obedience to our lawful Magistrates, and by varnishing them over with the distorted Glosses of their corrupt minds, make them speak what they never intended in the least to countenance or favour.*

2. *The second General cause of our Miscarriages, is the precipitant and inconsiderate Zeal and Fervour of those who took upon them to instruct the people, which draw along with it many evil and pernicious consequences. And though I have so much Charity as to think, that most of them directed their labours, in that kind, to the glory of God, and made that the*

ulti-

ultimate end and reſult of their Preaching; yet, there is a zeal which is without knowledge and judgment, and the intereſt of Religion is not then beſt advanced, when her Prieſts (from whoſe lips ſhould flow wiſdom) are moſt ignorant. But that I may not ſeem to charge them only with Generals, I will diſcend to ſome more particular Conſiderations upon this head; by which it will eaſily appear, with what great indiſcretion they managed that high affair they undertook.

1. *Therefore they exceedingly erred in propounding to their Charge, ſuch crude and uncocted Doctrines, as (beſides the inconſiſtency of them with the principles of Reaſon, and Truths of firſt inſcription, and incoherence with the Divine Attributes, (then which, nothing can be excogitated more infallible for the Exploration of whatever falls under humane cognizance) which is, in ſome meaſure, made good in the following Diſcourſe) they likewiſe put a certain ſtop to the progreſs of Chriſtianity throughout the World, and are the greateſt impediment to the diſſemination of the Goſpel, to them that are without; it being given to be the Religion of all mankind, to run and be glorious, and to conquer and ſubdue the Nations to the entertainment of it. For, unleſs we will imagine men ſo ſtupid, and ignorantly devotional, that they will embrace*

any

any thing, though never ſo diſagreeing with the native ſentiments of their own minds; it is impoſſible they ſhould ever give any real and unfaigned aſſent to ſuch Dogmata *of Chriſtianity, as pretend to no other Author, but the Eternal* Logos *and Wiſdom of God, and are propounded to rational and intellectual creatures endued with a diſcriminative ſenſe and perception between truth and falſhood; and yet, by all the reaſon that is in them, cannot make them to appear ſo. And though the Doctrins themſelves ſhould not be in their whole frame and contexture irrational, yet if we give abſurd and inconcinnous explications of them, there will be as ſmall hope and expectation that any man ſhould be convinced and perſwaded by them, as if they were altogether falſe. Such is the intellectual Fabrick of mens minds, that they cannot believe or disbelieve what they will; but there are certain laws and principles interwoven in the eſſential frame of their Natures by the great Architect of all things, by which they are bound up and limited, and which are the foundations of all Knowledge, whether Natural, Moral, or Metaphyſical. And 'tis very ſtrange to think, that infinite Wiſdom, which alone works conſtantly and evenly, and according to the capacities and meaſures of creatures, ſhould now in this grand Myſtery*

of

of the recovery of the World, which of all things is the moſt like that high and incomprehenſible intellect, which gave birth unto it, ſo deviate from the unchangeable laws of it's own being, as to propound ſuch Articles and Propoſitions to the World, which without the greateſt reluctancy and violation of their Natural Powers and Faculties, they can never fully credit or believe. And queſtionleſs ſuch a way and method of proceeding would ſo miſerably confound the beautiful Order and Symmetry of things, that beſide it muſt neceſſarily engage the Divine Power to the production of a perpetual Miracle for the begetting Faith and Aſſent in men; it likewiſe layes them open and obnoxious to inevitable Errors, Falſities and Deluſions, and there will be no means left for the attaining to the truth of any thing. And now let any man conſider, what little probability or plauſibility of reaſon there is, that ſuch a Doctrine as this, whether poſitively declared ſo in it ſelf, or made ſo by the perverſe Gloſſes, and Paraphraſtical Expoſitions of others, ſhould win and gain ground upon the World, and effect that purpoſe for which it was at firſt intended.

It was the advice and counſel of the Apoſtle 1 Cor. x. 32. *that we give no offence either to the* Jew, *or to the* Greek, *whereby to alienate their minds from ſo excellent a Religion;*

for there is nothing ſo much obſtructs the diffuſion of any Principles or Dogmata, *be they of what ſort they will, as when they contain ſomething which may adminiſter juſt cauſe of ſcruple, and beget an averſion to it in the mind of a rational and unprejudic'd perſon. He therefore that would bring over a free and ingenuous Spirit, whether Jew or Heathen to Chriſtianity, muſt be ſure that he aſſert nothing Dogmatically, or poſitively lay it down as an indiſpenſable Article of the Chriſtian Faith, which the other can reject upon clear and ſolid grounds of Reaſon; for, aſſuredly, no part of Chriſtianity can be repugnant to Right Reaſon. Therefore to begin with the Jew, who taking juſt exceptions againſt many* Dogmata *of Chriſtianity, as they are in common vogue amongſt us: but particularly diſguſting that harſh and rigid Doctrine of* Inconditionate Reprobation, *expreſſes his diſlike and diſſatisfaction in ſuch like terms as theſe; "That "God gave Statutes, and Judgments, and de- "livered a Law to* Moſes *on Mount* Sinai, *I am "ſufficiently convinced of, from the conſtant "and uninterrupted Tradition of our Fathers, "and that I am equally obliged to perform due "obedience to it, is in my apprehenſion a truth "as indubitable as the other: But that I ſhould "deſert the Religion of my Anceſtors, and em- "brace a Novel Doctrine wholly repugnant to,*

and

" *and inconſiſtent not only with the common*
" *principles of Reaſon, but the Law of* Moſes,
" *and Prophetick Writings, and manifeſtly ten-*
" *ding to the everſion and extirpation of all*
" *Religion in the World (for, who will put his*
" *truſt in that God who takes greater pleaſure*
" *in Deſtroying, than in Saving of his Crea-*
" *tures?) will argue as great Impiety, as it*
" *will appear Fantaſtickneſs and Imprudence*
" *in the eyes of all that believe a God and*
" *Providence in the World. For under the*
" Moſaical *Oeconomy, God like a juſt and pru-*
" *dent Legiſlator, makes the ground and foun-*
" *dation of all his Promiſes and Menaces, to*
" *be the Obedience or Diſobedience of his Sub-*
" *jects; and Benefits are not conferred but hy-*
" *pothetically, and with reſpect to the conditi-*
" *on annexed to them; nor Puniſhments exe-*
" *cuted, but upon the actual breach and vio-*
" *lation of a Law: And beſide this, you tell us,*
" *that when the Meſſias comes, he will bring*
" *into the World ſuch a Religion and Service*
" *as will moſt ſuit with our rational and in-*
" *tellectual Natures, ſuch as may approve it*
" *ſelf to our inward and divine ſenſe as truly*
" *excellent and lovely, comprehending the*
" *flower and ſumme of whatever is Worthy,*
" *Noble, and Generous; which, you ſay, is moſt*
" *lively depainted and ſet out to us in that which*
" *you call the Chriſtian Religion, the great* Ar-

" canum *and Myſtery of which* (*according to*
" *the principles of your Doctrine*) *ſeems to be*
" *this, That God hath eternally Elected a cer-*
" *tain number of perſons to inherit Bleſſedneſs*
" *with him, and ſent his ſon to ſignifie the ſame*
" *to them, and to publiſh this his decree: but to*
" *caſt away the reſt upon the pretence of his So-*
" *veraignty and Dominion over them; either*
" *therefore the coming of Chriſt is upon rational*
" *grounds yet expected, or if he have been al-*
" *ready manifeſted to the World, your Religion is*
" *none of his, nor was he ever the Author of it,*
" *but the ſpurious reſults and effuxes of fanciful*
" *perſons obtruded as neceſſary Articles of faith*
" *upon the World. It is impoſſible I ſhould ever*
" *believe, that the great Creator of the Uni-*
" *verſe, who in our Law declared himſelf to be*
" *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-*
" *ſuffering and abundant in goodneſs; and who*
" *ſo often forgat the Crimes and Apoſtacies of*
" *our Forefathers, when they returned and*
" *ſought him with their whole heart, ſhould*
" *now ſo change his Nature, and ſuſpend the*
" *rayes and benign emanations of his commu-*
" *nicative life, in this which you affirm to be*
" *the laſt and moſt perfect manifeſtation of*
" *himſelf, as not only without any regard had*
" *of their juſt provocations, but even before*
" *they became ſons of ſenſe and were born in-*
" *to the World, to Reprobate the farr greateſt*

" *part*

"part of Mankind, and make them the "unhappy objects of his endless displeasure. "And surely if he himself once judged it a "less merciful and benign Oeconomy to use "his Prerogative of Absolute Dominion in "visiting the sins of the Fathers upon the "Children though otherwise culpable, and "therefore confirmed it with an Oath, that "As he lived, there should be no more "cause of using that Proverb in Israel, The "Fathers have eaten sower Grapes, and "the Childrens teeth are set on edge; "he will not in these last dayes, wherein "you tell us, he hath clearly explicated and "unfolded his Everblessed Nature, so farr "derogate from his illustrious Goodness, as "to become more harsh and severe, in ma-"king Innocency it self feel the heavy "weight of an implacable vengeance. Was "he once so gracious as to accept of an a-"tonement for sin, and pardon iniquities "upon the Oblation of an Expiatory Sacri-"fice; and will he now have no mercy and "compassion upon the blameless works of his "own hands, who never offended unless it "were in acting according to those princi-"ples his own good hands placed in them? "The first man was not turned out of Pa-"radise, and condemned to manure the "Earth, till he rebelled against his Maker,

" and tasted of the tree of Knowledge: but " according to your Doctrine, the souls of " men are no sooner created, but immediate- " ly thrown out of those armes which then " embraced them, into a state of bitterness " and sorrow, a region of malediction which " both God and man abhorr. In a word " therefore, if the long-expected Messias " have propugated this Doctrine in the " World, I dare not be so treacherous to " God and Reason as to entertain what in " my apprehension they both plainly de- " ny.

Having seen the just exceptions of the Jew against Christianity, occasioned by that precarious Assertion of Irrespective Decrees, which to every discerning eye appears a mighty impediment and hinderance to the planting in them a true value and esteem of the Doctrine of the Holy Jesus, We may in the next place attend a while to the Heathen, who though he be deprived of those clear Declarations of the Nature and Mind of God, which Christians do plentifully enjoy; yet having the principles of good and evil, just and unjust, displayed upon his Nature by the bountiful maker of all things, and Truth being alwayes like it self in however various subjects it may reside, thus be-

speaks

ſpeaks thoſe vain Theologaſters who out of an imprudent zeal, think no man well till he entertain their nice and impertinent Doctrines.

"When I look into the outward Fabrick "of the corporeal world, and revolve the "exact Order, Symmetry and Beauty of the "external Creation, how every thing acts "regularly within it's own Sphear, and all "conſpire to the mutual good and perfection "of the whole, I cannot but acknowledg the "exiſtence of an Eternal mind, from whoſe "pregnant fecundity this great ball of the "Earth, the blew Ethereal skie, and what-"ever lies hid and undecerned within the "vaſt capacities of immenſe ſpace, recei-"ved their being and ſubſiſtence. From this "exuberant ſource of Goodneſs did mine "and the ſouls of all mankind flow, and "thoſe various orders and degrees of ra-"tional beings which taſt the bounty of their "Creator in their ſeveral ſtations and ca-"pacities: and all theſe, though in different "meaſures and proportions he loves and "cares for, and takes an infinite delight "and complacency to ſee them all exert thoſe "vital powers he was pleaſed to beſtow up-"on them; For I cannot think that God "made any of his creatures to be miſerable, "or that he ſhould ſo much darken the early

" rayes of his Paternal benignity in bringing
" them into being, by making their Exiſtence
" a burden to them, and ſerve for no other
" end then for a protraction of their miſe-
" ries; leaſt of all can I, without a mani-
" feſt violation of my faculties, yield my aſ-
" ſent to that horrid Doctrine which you
" maintain and propound as neceſſary to be
" believed by every one who expects a bleſſed
" immortality with the Gods above, viz. That
" the Benigne and All-wiſe Maker of the World
" did reſolve from the outgoings of Eternity, to
" deſtroy the greateſt part of his nobleſt
" Creation; and therefore decreed, that out
" all mankind whom he intended to ſend down
" upon Earth, he would cull out a ſmall num-
" ber, known to him by name, whom he
" would irreſiſtibly (without reſpect to their
" future Faith or Obedience) make happy
" in the fruition of himſelf: but determined
" (without conſideration or previſion of their
" ſin and diſobedience) to damne and ex-
" cruciate with interminable torments, mee-
" ly upon his own will and pleaſure, all the
" reſt of the World, ſo ſoon as Death ſhould
" deliver them from the infelicities and bur-
" denſome circumſtances of a painful life
" here upon Earth. This, I ſay, which you
" exact of your Converts, I have not faith
" enough to receive; For, can any ratinal

prſon

"person imagine, That God should become a "Tyrant to his creatures? That he should "have no compassion toward the works of "his own hands? Nay further, That he "should introduce them upon the stage of "being on purpose to reproach and make them "miserable; that let them do what they "can in order to their future Blessedness, "they should be befriended of none, nor ever "pitied by the tender bowels of that Al-"mighty Goodness which first brought them "forth, but lie as unfortunate marks against "which the arrows of Divine vengeance are "perpetually level'd, and their cries no more "regarded by the Father of Spirits, then the "groans of dying Victims by those insolent "and unpitiful Deities to whom they are of-"fer'd; and which yet casts a greater stain "and blot upon the Oeconomy of your God, "that he might not seem to condemn the in-"nocent, but to act under the specious pre-"text of Justice, you make him first design, "then plot and contrive their ruine; which "to effect, that he might set the better face "upon it, he enacts a Law, entailing a sure "and severe punishment upon the breach "of it, and in the mean time not only not "affords those whom he intends to destroy, "the least strength imaginable to perform it: "but on the contrary, by an overruling and

"un-

"uncontroulable power (which ſome of your
"Authors magnifie as the faireſt gemme in
"his beautiful Crown of Glory) neceſſitates
"them to have a vile commerce and cor-
"reſpondence with Sin and Hell, that the
"beams and rayes of his Juſtice may ſhine
"with the more dazeling Luſtre in their per-
"dition and deſtruction? but as for thoſe
"whom his diſcriminative love ſelected to
"the participation of his own pacate felicity
"and beatitude, the ſame unlimited power
"moſt effectually carries them on through all
"ſtates and conditions, winking at their moſt
"enormous and hainous lapſes, perhaps into
"Adultery and Murder, or other courſe Im-
"pieties, and never forſakes them till they
"they are brought to the quiet poſſeſſion of
"what was theirs by an unchangeable De-
"cree before the World began. How deeply
"will the whole Creation of Rational beings
"reſent ſuch an act as this? and what
"ſmall reaſon can any man have to caſt his
"care, and erect a foundation of his hope up-
"on that God who notwithſtanding the
"greateſt expreſſions of love and kindneſs
"to them, the moſt pathetical invitations of
"them to accept the gracious overtures of
"his Goodneſs, the higheſt ſenſe of averſion
"to their miſery, accompanied with Oaths
"and Proteſtations againſt it, and the faireſt

"pro-

"*promiſes of Rewards and Bleſſings to them*
"*if they will obey, ſhall yet underhand lay*
"*an inevitable train of cauſes to entrap*
"*and foil them? I find that my dear ſpi-*
"*rit affectionately breathes after a freer*
"*participation of the Divine Life and Na-*
"*ture, and makes many little ſallies and*
"*attempts to ariſe beyond the ſtrait and nar-*
"*row laws of corporeal life, into a ſtate of*
"*true freedome and liberty; and I cannot*
"*but heartily complain of the charming*
"*and alluring Magick of the Earthly and*
"*Brutiſh life in me, that I am too much*
"*awake and alive to the effluxes and emiſ-*
"*ſions of the material World, whereby the*
"τὸ θεῖον, *the Divinity that is enwrapped*
"*and as it were incarnate within me, be-*
"*comes weak and unactive: but my hope*
"*is, that through the mighty Power of*
"*that Divine Love which upholds the Cre-*
"*ation with extended armes, the heaven-*
"*ly part within me ſhall prevail, and gain*
"*a compleat Conqueſt and Victory, and*
"*that when this mortal life ſhall periſh,*
"*I ſhall become* θεὸς ἀμέριτος ἐν ἐν θνητοῖς,
"An immortal God, no more depreſſed
"with the weight of Terreſtrial encum-
"brance. *But alaſs, according to your Do-*
"*ctrine, if this be all, it is but like the*
"Prelude *to a fatal* Tragedy, *or the ſud-*

"*den*

"*den blaze of a dying Lamp, and I may*
"*for all this fall ſhort and be deceived;*
"*for if you attribute a Power to your God*
"*of Simulation and Fraud, he may evacuate*
"*all my expectations, notwithſtanding the*
"*pretended Declarations of his Will and*
"*Veracity to the contrary. To ſay no more*
"*then this, Can he puniſh thoſe effects or*
"*operations in me which his own immedi-*
"*ate and energetical concourſe was the cauſe*
"*of? Am I become guilty becauſe I acted*
"*under the irreſiſtible impulſes and motions*
"*of his will? If this therefore be a true*
"*deſcription of the Nature of God, there*
"*is no reaſonable man but would judge him*
"*to be rather ſome flaming* Erynnis *with*
"*curled Snakes and knotted whips to chaſtiſe*
"*the World, then an Almighty, Good and Wiſe*
"Numen.

We ſee then what little hope there is of ingratiating and recommending Chriſtianity to thoſe that are without, while we either poſitively maintain, or conſequentially introduce ſuch Doctrines as Chriſtian, which in their very frame and complexion are repugnant to Right Reaſon, and inconſiſtent with the Oeconomy of Providence in the World. And while the Preachers of the Goſpel impoſe upon men ſuch crude notions,

they

they not only do them the moſt uncharitable piece of ſervice that lightly can be imagined: but likewiſe block up the way and paſſage of truth to others who may be in very forward degrees of preparation to receive it.

2. *They were very much miſtaken in the Order and Method of propounding the Articles and Doctrines of Chriſtianity to their Auditors, and by that means (ſuppoſing the truth of thoſe Notions they deſired to implant in them) rendred them farr leſs acceptable then otherwiſe they might have been. The ever-bleſſed Son of God, the eternal mind and wiſdome of his Father, when he deſcended from his glory and became a Man, that he might teach the World that ſalutary Knowledge which ſhould inſtate them in their priſtine Bleſſedneſs, did not communicate to them that recondite Myſtery all at once, but* κατὰ δύναμιν ἀκούειν, *as they were able to hear it; that is, according to their Meaſure and Proportion. Every mans Criterion and diſcriminative faculty is not in a due and fit diſpoſition for the reception of high and raiſed Speculations, no more then every ear is fitly qualified for the judging of Harmony. As in all Arts and Sciences there are ſome Rudiments and Principles to be learned before we can arrive*

rive to a conſiderable meaſure of perfection in them; ſo in Religion there are ſome Catechetical Inſtructions and Cognate Preparations to be uſed before we enter upon the Sublime and Theoretical Doctrines contained in it. For conſidering the great degeneracy and Apoſtacy of mankind from their true Happineſs, and with what exorbitant and unlimited deſires and paſſions they come into the World toward the things of this preſent life, and how hardly they are wrought of to the entertainment of what is truly good and holy, the propounding of intricate Myſteries to them, while their diſtinguiſhing ſenſe of good and evil is ſo monſtrouſly depraved and out of order, is but (to uſe our Saviours ſimilitude) to put new Wine into old Bottles, offenſive to the hearers, and corruptive of the Truth it ſelf: and we may with as great reaſon expect a Subſtantial and ſtately Edifice without any foundation, or full eared-Corn ſo ſoon as the bare Grain is caſt into the ground, as look for the perfect and compleat Image of Chriſt in him who does not yet underſtand the Principles and Rudiments of Religion. For what ſpecimen *doth that man give of the pure and undefiled Nature of God living in him, who can knowingly injure his Brother, or paſs by with an unconcerned look*

the

the calamitous objects of Pity and Compaſſion? Or, what proof can he bring that he is acted by that Almighty Spirit of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and renewed into the blameleſs Image of the bleſſed Jeſus, who omits no opportunities of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion? Theſe things therefore which are the very ground-work and foundation of that Evangelical Building which Chriſt came to erect in the ſouls of men, ought with all dure care and diligence, and with great earneſtneſs and ſerioufneſe to be preſſed upon men by the Preachers of the Goſpel, that the People may be convinced their Teachers are real and ſincere in the buſineſs, and that what they ſo inculcate upon them is for the future and unſpeakable benefit of their immortal ſouls. And by the frequent uſe of theſe Monitory Cautions and Exhortations it is to be hoped that men will grow more holy, and practice with greater circumſpection the plain duties of Morality, by which means they will be more apt to conceive and judge of the other more Speculative Doctrines and Articles of Chriſtianity, which ought to be let alone till their proper time come, wherein they may with ſome advantage be propounded to the hearers, they being by the conſtant exerciſe of the Precepts of Juſtice, Equity and Goodneſs

neſs prepared and competently well fitted for the reception of the Myſterious and Recondite part of Religion. It cannot therefore but be acknowledged a piece of great inadvertency and opinionative Curioſity in the generality of Preachers in theſe late times, to make it their buſineſs, in the firſt place, to inſtruct their Hearers in the moſt difficult, and many times diſputable points of the Chriſtian Religion, and fill their heads with unprofitable opinions, while they neglected the τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου, *the more ſerious and weighty matters of Juſtice, Mercy and Compaſſion. From hence came it, that in their Catechiſms and Confeſſions of Faith, they crowded ſo many unneceſſary and fruitleſs Doctrines under the name and notion of Indubitable Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and which were neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation; ſuch as are the Poſitions concerning Gods Decree of Election and Reprobation, &c. And here I cannot but with all due regard and honour, commend the great Prudence of the Compilers, as of the whole Liturgie and Service, ſo particularly of the Catechiſme of the Church of* England, *for the Inſtructing of the younger ſort in the Rudiments and Principles of Chriſtianity, wherein as there is nothing propounded as indiſpenſably neceſſary to be believed, but*

what

what is undoubtedly ſo; in like manner they modeſtly contented themſelves in inſerting only ſuch things as were by all the reformed part of Chriſtendome looked upon as unqueſtionably true, and the contrary condemned as falſe and adulterate: ſo that I may ſay of it as David *of* Goliahs *Sword,* There is none like it.

Thus (Reader) I have given thee a full Account and Reaſon of the following Diſcourſe, and of the Neceſſity of ſome ſuch way and method of Inſtructing the People as I have here deſcribed; which certainly is not to fill their brains with puffie Opinions, and jejune Diſputations: but a zealous cautioning them againſt all Vice and Immorality whatever, and a ſerious exhorting them to the practice of Holyneſs, Juſtice and Equity, Obedience to their Lawful Prince, and to all inferior Magiſtrates, to do good and communicate to the Neceſſities of the Indigent and Calamitous; and when the caſe requires a further inſtruction in the Myſteries of Religion, ſuch a full and eaſie Explication of the ſeveral Articles and Doctrines contained in it, as may beſt ſuit with their Capacities and the plain Texts of Holy Scripture, which as

it is recommended as most useful for the promotion of Piety by our Mother *the* Church *of* England; *so it is most agreeable with the Nature of the thing it self.*

GODS

GODS GOODNESS VINDICATED, Againſt *Abſolute Reprobation.*

CHAP. I.

Inconditionate Reprobation inconſiſtent with the Declarations of God in Holy Scripture.

THERE is ſcarce any Doctrine or Opinion maintain'd in the World (be it never ſo Monſtrous and Irrational) but pleads Scripture to countenance and authorize it; and though Truth be but one, yet every Sect and Faction claims an Intereſt in it; and that Error may paſs more

freely diſguiſed and undiſcerned amongſt men, it is now become a faſhion to alledge the Divinely-inſpired Writings, as an unqueſtionable Evidence for the reaſonableneſs and Truth of whatever ſtrange and uncouth conceits men pleaſe to divulge in the World. Such is the Hypotheſis of *Abſolute Reprobation* we have in hand: And he that ſhall peruſe the Writings of thoſe who deſire to maintain it, and conſider with what wonderful confidence they aſſert it, and how thick-ſet the Margins of their Treatiſes are with citations of Scripture to patronize and defend it, and yet how little or nothing there is in that Sacred Volume that in good earneſt looks that way, will be ſoon perſwaded, that it is an inveterate prejudice, rather then any probability of Truth, which makes them ſuch pertinacious Adherents to ſo ill-framed a Doctrine. And that I may make good what I have affirmed, I ſhall begin with *Divine Revelation*, wherein God declares his gratious Oeconomy and Diſpenſation with mankind, and Vindicates the glory and honour of his Nature and Attributes, from the aſperſions and imputations of cruelty and injuſtice, aſſerting his Rule and Dominion in the World to be Righteous and Equal, and perfectly agreeable

agreeable to the higheſt Wiſdome and Goodneſs; ſo that none of his Creatures, unleſs it be ſuch who are deſperately forlorn and wicked, can poſſibly wiſh his Not-being in the World. This is his *Name* whereby he proclaims himſelf to *Moſes*, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering and abundant in goodneſs and truth:* and this Name God hath verified in the whole Oeconomy of his Providence to the lapſed World, *Oh that my people had ſuch an heart in them* (ſayes he) *that they would fear me and keep my Commandements!* But why doth God wiſh this? not for any ſelf deſign or particular intereſt (for our goodneſs extendeth not unto him, nor can our ſins detract any thing from the ſedate and compoſed happineſs of his everbleſſed Nature) but *that it might go well with them, and their Children for ever.* Behold here the flagrant love and intenſe affection of the God of *Iſrael*, to a ſtiff-necked and diſobedient people! Do not theſe paſſionate ſtreins proceed from his whole heart, and are they not Arguments of the greateſt ſeriouſneſs? How then can he unfeignedly deſire that they ſhould walk in the wayes of life, when his own good *Pleaſure* from the out-goings of Eternity hath irreſiſtibly

Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Deut. v. 29.

determined their motion into the pathes of deſtruction? Can a tender Mother expoſe her innocent Babe to be devoured by wilde Beaſts, or ſawn aſunder before her eyes? Can ſhe *forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion upon the Son of her womb?* Suppoſe there may be ſome ſo obdurate and unrelenting that their bowels will not yern over ſuch a diſmal ſpectacle, yet they are but few that have degenerated ſo deeply into this more then brutiſh ſtupidity; and can we think the *compaſſionate Father of Spirits* who is infinitely more pitiful in all the degrees of intenſion and extenſion then the beſt of the Sons of Men, will betray his own dear off-ſpring, or prove ſo unnatural to deſign them to the moſt acute torments the wit and ſubtilty of Men or Devils can invent, and that to eternal ages, before ever their Exiſtence gave them the leaſt opportunity of offending him? God is *Love* it ſelf, whoſe nature is ever to be diffuſive and communicative to all the poſſibilities of beings, and therefore glories not in this that he is powerful to ſlay, to damne and excruciate in unheard and perpetual torments: but that he *ſpeaks in righteouſneſs, and is mighty to ſave.* And that he might fully convince the World of this gracious

Iſai. xlix. 15.

1 Joh. iv. 16.

Iſa. lxiii. 1.

pro-

property of his, he hath pronounced Judgment to be his *Strange work*, and his *Strange act*, which mens Impenitencies only force him to; for he will not that any periſh: but that every Creature ſhould be happy in it's meaſure and capacity. And leſt we Sons of Darkneſs ſhould entertain any ſuch thought of the God of Light, as if he pleaſed himſelf in our ruin, he hath joyned an Oath to it, and hath ſworn *As he liveth he hath no pleaſure in the death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live.* He would have all his Creatures know that he is no way acceſſary to their deſtruction, *O Iſrael thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf; but in me is thy help.* And when he ſees what froward and untoward Creatures we are, that readily forſake what he loves, and run after that which his ſoul delighteth not in, making ſuch unhappy choices for our ſelves, as if we ſtudied how to be our own Executioners, then he begins to reaſon with us, *O my people, what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? Teſtifie againſt me? What evil have ye found in me? Have I been a barren Wilderneſs unto you, or a Land of darkneſs?* and if any ſhall yet be ſo preſumptuous as to caſt the blame of their wretchedneſs and miſery

Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

Hoſ. xiii. 9.

Mich. vi. 3.

Jer. ii. 5, & 31.

upon ſo benign a Father, he ſtands ready to acquit himſelf, and calls heaven and earth to record againſt them, that he hath
Deut. xiii. 19. ſet before them Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing, and requeſted them to chuſe that which may make them for ever
Joh. v. 40. happy; *But they will not come unto him that they may have life.* Nay further, that God might take away all manner of excuſe from the Sons of men, and manage his cauſe in a way of Reaſon and Equity, he hath not onely ſhewed his Righteouſneſs to the Heathen, and declared his Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: but aſſerted it poſſible for men to perform his Will, ſo that his *yoke* is in it ſelf eaſie, and his *burthen* is really light,
* λογικὴ λατρεία. and his ſervice is reaſonable *; that is, agreeable to the dictates and ſentiments of
Rom. xii. 1. our rational Nature; For, *the righteouſneſs which is of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe;*
Rom. x. 6, 8. *the Word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayeſt do it.* No man can complain of any hard uſage, that God commands impoſſibilities, and injoyns things that are above his reach; For the Spirit of God, that mighty principle of Life and Vigour which pervades the whole World of intellectual agents, is ready to aſſiſt the generous and hearty

attempts

attempts of all ſincere perſons after the Divine Life and Nature; for ſo he who gave that gift to his Apoſtles, and aſſured mankind of the continuance of it till the end of the World, hath long ſince made known to us, that if *Earthly Parents know how to give good gifts to their Children, God our heavenly Father ſhould much more give his Holy Spirit to all that ask it of him.* Luk. xi. 13. He would have all the Creation take notice, that it is not for any ends of his own that he is at ſuch pains with us; *My people* (ſayes God) *have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to themſelves broken Ciſterns which can hold no water*; Jer. ii. 13. Methinks the words ſignifie thus much, as if God ſhould thus beſpeak us, O my people if you could mend your ſelves by forſaking me the fountain of living Waters, then I could be content, and reaſon would that I ſhould bear with you: but that you ſhould betake your ſelves to broken Ciſterns which can hold no water, and are then dryed up when ye moſt ſtand in need of them, this argues your lightneſs and folly. *God waits to be gracious*, and with infinite patience and long-ſufferance expects our Repentance, and ſuffers that tempeſtuous whirlwind of enraged Vengeance which Iſai. xxx. 18.

Sin

Sin and Vice have fed and congeſted, to roll long within the Orbe of Mercy before it burſt forth, and bear down the ſinner into the horrors and agonies of Eternal ages. And this is ſufficiently evidenced by thoſe Pathetical expreſſions of his unwillingneſs to puniſh his Creatures, till at laſt being compelled to it, he ſets about it with a kind of reluctancy of ſpirit, and is as it were, grieved to the heart that he muſt uſe ſuch rigorous means to reduce them to himſelf; *How ſhall I give thee up Ephraim? how ſhall I deliver thee Iſrael? How ſhall I make thee as Admah? how ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* This is Gods gracious Expoſtulation with himſelf, as if he ſhould have thus ſaid, What ſhall I do unto thee O my people? or how ſhould I behave my ſelf toward thee? Should I make thee an example of my judgment as *Admah*? Or, ſhould I conſume thee in a moment like *Zeboim*? No ſurely, my heart is quite averſe from ſuch harſh proceedings, they are even extorted from me; therefore my heart yerns after thee O *Ephraim*, my bowels are turned and melted within me, (an expreſſion of the deareſt love and affection that poſſibly can be, *Jer.* xxxi. 20.) I am even overcome

Hoſ. xi. 8, 9.

come with thoſe deep-fetcht breathings of affectionate Love which I bear unto thee; therefore I will not execute the fierceneſs of my anger, for I am God and not Man, I bear no malice againſt any of the Creation, but had rather my kindneſs then my diſpleaſure ſhould endear men to the conſideration of their own happineſs. And at laſt he appeals to our own Reaſons and Conſciences, and is content to ſubmit himſelf and his Diſpenſations to our own thoughts, whether we can imagine any better courſe then that he hath taken, to reform us; *Judge I pray you between me and my Vineyard; what could I have done more to my Vineyard then I have not done?* Iſai. v. 4. So that it is only when all means prove ineffectual, that the God of Love turns to a conſuming fire, and makes us the proper objects of his direful Vengeance. To take yet a more direct view of that fair Perfection, the very root and centre of the Deity, I mean Goodneſs or Love, let us behold God manifeſt in the fleſh, and look upon him who being the brightneſs of his Fathers Glory, the expreſs Image and Character of his Perſon, encircled with the loving armes of Heaven, and folded up in the boſome of Bleſſed-

neſs,

neſs, yet left thoſe ſacred Manſions of Happineſs out of pure good will to the race of Mankind, and put off the robes of Glory, that he might be capacitated to dwell in a body of fleſh, to the intent that *whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* That pure ſoul which ſhone with an Ethereal brightneſs, farr ſurpaſſing the glory of the Sun, being vitally united with the *Eternal Logos*, and full of the Divine Life, did inwardly pity and commiſerate the lapſed poſterity of *Adam*; wherefore that he might more abundantly demonſtrate the riches of his grace, he declared himſelf the Saviour not of ſome few only, but of the whole World, that the deſign of his appearing was to ſcatter an healing influence upon the broken and diſtracted Sons of men, and that the effects of it ſhould be *good tidings of great joy to all people*, aſſuring guilty ſinners of the love of their offended God, and that yet they had not ſinned out of the reach of Mercy, but that now while 'tis called to day, if they would hear the God of love ſpeaking to their conſciences, and gently mollifying their obdurate hearts, they ſhould run unto him by a ſpeedy repentance, and he would melt and thaw their frozen ſpirits into

into a plyable ductility by the warm gleams of his Eternal Love, looſen the wings of their entangled Souls, and ſecure their flight into the quiet regions of Peace and Joy. When this Son of Love who was alwayes going about doing good, ſaw the Multitude ſcattered abroad like Sheep that have no Shepherd, it is ſaid, ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, *He was moved with compaſſion on them:* which word (ſayes a Learned Critick) denotes, *Summam & vehementem commiſerationem ex intimis viſceribus profectam*, Such an inward feeling and yerning of the heart and ſoul, as melts the very bowels into a pitiful commiſeration of the object they are affected with: which intenſe affection is called σπλάγχνα ἐλέους θεοῦ, *The bowels of the mercy of God*, Luk. i. 78. And when he came to *Jeruſalem*, how did he weep over her, and moiſten his freſh Laurels with a ſhower of Tears, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killedſt the Prophets, and ſtonedſt them that were ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* His heart was ſo full of grief, that it could hold no longer, but muſt empty it ſelf in a ſympathizing flood of tears over that incorrigible

Mat. ix. 36.

Matth. xxiii. 37.

corrigible City, ſoftning that ground with his watry eyes which ſhortly after ſhould be bedewed with blood. *Oh that thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Surely there is no man ſo blaſphemous as to think Chriſt wept tears of deceit and treachery; No, they were the very breathings of his heart to a people that were going into inevitable deſtruction. For if we look into the whole Hiſtory of the Goſpel, we ſhall find, that our bleſſed Lord was of as tender and paſſive a conſtitution as ever the world had any cognizance of; and in this very inſtance, which was Chriſts laſt ſolemn viſit for the recovery of thoſe rebellious Jews, he hath left upon record to all ſucceeding ages of the World, the fervency of his Love, and the greatneſs of their Obſtinacy and Rebellion: He rode in triumph, the children ſang *Hoſanna* to him, and he cured many impotent and diſeaſed perſons, that at leaſt that miraculous and wonder-working Power reſiding in him might extort this confeſſion from them, that he was the Son of God and the promiſed Meſſiah; and after all this, he weeps for their Infidelity and pities them with tears, and having his heart

and

and ſpirit full of love that is ſtronger then death, he leaves no way untryed: but ſpends the whole day amongſt them, and looks round about him towards evening, to ſee if any would invite him home, being unwilling to depart, till their Ingratitude forces him away. And now that he is exalted in Glory, and ſits at the right hand of his Father inveſted with Majeſty and Pówer, his Compaſſions are no whit abated, nor is that benign care and Providence, which in the dayes of his Humiliation and condeſcent he exerciſed over the fallen generations of Men at all leſſened by the augmentation of his Bleſſedneſs and Felicity: but dayly woes and beſeeches us by his Miniſters and Servants to enter upon terms of amity and friendſhip with God, who in him hath been pleaſed to reconcile the World unto himſelf. Should we now caſt our eyes upon the whole frame and fabrick of the Goſpel, we ſhall find it to be the moſt effectual engine that infinite Wiſdome could contrive for the winding of the minds and ſpirits of men from their too eager purſuit of the pleaſures and gratifications of the lower life, and working them up to thoſe noble and high purpoſes for which they were made. And doubtleſs there is no man in whom prejudice

prejudice doth not outbalance reaſon, but will readily ſet his ſeal to this truth, there appearing in the Goſpel ſuch ſweet condeſcentions to our capacities and complyances with the frailty of our condition, ſuch infinite averſneſs to our miſery and deſtruction, and ſuch powerful endearments and attractives to Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, that he cannot judge it to proceed from any other, then a principle of Infinite Goodneſs, Love and Wiſdome. I might here further tell you, that the Goſpel being deſigned to be the Religion of men of all ſorts and conditions, of all ranks and qualities, and ſo adapted to our rational powers, and in the main drift and ſcope of it ſo plain and eaſie even to the moſt illiterate capacities, Divine Wiſdom could not but highly approve of it, and by a favourable benediction ſuffer it to have that Univerſal effect it pretends to; that is, the full and compleat renovation of all mankind that would not wilfully reject the counſel of God againſt themſelves, and the perfecting every one without exception or limitation that would faithfully and cordially to his utmoſt powers adhere unto it.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

Abſolute Reprobation *repugnant to Right Reaſon: wherein is ſet ont the Moral Nature of our Souls in reference to Good and Evil, Truth and Falſhood. And this Second Argument made good in Four Propoſitions.*

THere is nothing that can lay any claim or pretence to the deciſion of Queſtions of a Moral Nature and Import, but will appear very lame and ineffectual, without the aid and aſſiſtance of Right Reaſon, which is ſo noble and generous a principle, that if we take a ſerious view of it, it will ſoon diſcover to us it's Royal Pedigree and Divine Extraction. There is a near alliance and conſanguinity between the Reaſon of Man, and that Eternal Goodneſs which at firſt ſealed it as an impreſſion of his Nature upon our ſouls, and therefore there need be no ſuch diſtance between true Chriſtianity and it. For aſſuredly, that Divine Wiſdom which

at our firſt production implanted in us the apprehenſions and Idea's of things did ſo order the buſineſs, that if we uſed our diſcriminative faculties aright, we ſhould have no other conceptions of them then what did really and ſignificantly expreſs the Natures of the things themſelves, and ſuch as were Eternally lodg'd in the All-comprehenſive Intellect of the Deity. There being then no Judge on Earth whoſe Dictates and Determinations may be credited as Authentick and Infallible, and every man being commanded to *prove all things, to try the Spirits whether they be of God*, and to look carefully and diligently to himſelf that he fall not, nor be led into Error, and the Reaſon and underſtanding of man if rightly manag'd, being the *Candle of the Lord*, whereby he is inabled to examine and judge of Doctrines, it will follow, that it muſt determine of whatever dictates ſhall be propounded to him. He therefore that conſiders we were made by an Eternal mind, that the original of our beings is from an All-prefect Author, who at our firſt Creation ſtamped the impreſſes of his Nature upon us; and every thing that derives from him being in ſome meaſure and degree like himſelf, will without any heſitancy aſſent to this Truth,

Truth, *viz. That whatever offers it self to our rational Nature by a clear and distinct perception, is infallible so, and we are no longer to doubt of the truth of it.* And unless we grant this, it is impossible we should ever come to any certain knowledge of any thing in the World. Now that those Idea's which thus offer themselves to us, that is, by a clear and distinct perception are certainly so in the nature of the things themselves, we are no longer to doubt of, because Veracity is an Essential mode and Attribute of the Author of our beings, and therefore 'tis impossible he should deceive us in those things which we have an evident and distinct apprehension and cognizance of; and further we may take notice, that that Power in us which discriminates between the *Beings* and *Modes* of things, is the same that is in ‖ God, and participates of his Nature, and is nothing but a ray and beam let down from Heaven, by whose light we discover and apprehend the various kinds of objects, whether Moral, Physical or Metaphysical; according to that of *Epicharmus*, ὁ δὲ γ' τἀνθρώπῳ λόγος πέφυκ' ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου· and being so, the cause of all our Errors

‖ This made the bold Stoick affirm, that κατὰ λόγον a man is οὐδὲ χείρων τῶν θεῶν οὐδὲ μικρότερος. *Arrian.*

and Miſtakes muſt be attributed to our ſelves; not that we want thoſe faculties which ſhould give us a faithful and true repreſentation of things: but becauſe we abuſe them, whether by an inadvertency and anticipation in judgment, or by an inveterate prejudice contracted from an evil Education, or by what other means ſoever it comes to paſs. Reaſon therefore is the Vicarious Power of God in the Soul, and to refuſe it's Authority in ſuch things as of right belong unto it to judge of, is to reject the light of God ſhining within us, as *Hierocles* excellently diſcourſes,

In Carm. Pythag. Λόγῳ δὲ ὀρθῷ πείθεσθαι, καὶ Θεῷ, ταυτόν ἐστι· τὸ γὰρ λογικὸν γένος ἀμοιρῆται τῆς οἰκείας ἐλλάμψεως, ταῦτα βούλεται ἃ ὁ θεῖος ὁρίζει νόμος· Καὶ γίνεται σύμψηφος Θεῷ ἡ κατὰ θεὸν διακειμένη ψυχὴ, καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον καὶ τὸ λαμπρὸν ἀποβλέπουσα πράττει ἃ ἂν πράττῃ· that is, *To act according to the dictates of Right Reaſon, is the ſame as to obey God; for the rational Nature being once raiſed to the poſſeſſion of it's native brightneſs, wills and acts according to the determinations of the Divine Law and pleaſure: and the holy Soul that thus participates of the Deity, becomes in every thing conformable to the mind of God, and frames the whole Syſtem and comprehenſion of it's actions by the conduct and guidance of that Eternal Splendor.*

Splendor. All our knowledge in this our ſtate of degeneracy and imperfction, may not unfitly be called, according to the *Platoniſts*, a *Reminiſcency*, or an awakening thoſe multifarious Idea's either by her own internal Energy, or by the occurſions of ſenſible Phantaſms, which are treaſured up in the eſſence of the ſoul her ſelf; for now that the ſoul is ſent into this World, and rouz'd out of her long ſleep and ſtate of Inactivity, ſhe acts over again her former life, and recals thoſe Idea's and Notions of things which upon occaſion ſhe exerted ſomewhere elſe. But whether we give heed to this *Hypotheſis* or no, it is certain, that our ſouls, as they come out of the hands of God, are not like tranſparent Globes of pellucid Chryſtal, or fair and white ſheets wherein nothing is written, but eſſentially ſtored and filled with the indelible Characters and Idea's of Truth, to whoſe light ſo long as we faithfully attend, though we wander in abſtruſe, rugged, and dark pathes, we need not queſtion but that at laſt by their ſafe conduct we ſhall arrive to the regions of light, where all the miſts and difficulties which before enveloped us ſhall vaniſh into perfect day, and all things appear in their own proper dreſs, and

eſſential Characters: but when we neglect to give heed to theſe ſure and infallible guides, we are diſtracted and miſerably confounded in the contemplation of things, and are at a loſs where to bottom or ſettle our ſelves, which the fore-mentioned Author took notice of in theſe words,

Hierocles in Carm. Pythag. Φύσει δὲ ἡ ἀνθρώπων φύσις πολλῶν διαφόρων δόξασμάτων, ὅταν μὴ τοῖς κοιναῖς ἐννοίαις ὀρθῶς ἕπηται. That the Eſſential formes and Idea's of things are centrally co-united to the ſoul, and not then firſt begotten when brought into actual Exiſtence upon the ſeveral emergences of life; but the effects of that innate and pregnant Fecundity the kind and liberal hand of God beſtowed upon her, is a Noematical truth, and cannot but appear ſo to thoſe who attentively conſider and weigh the various animadverſive acts, and diſcriminative judgments the ſoul makes of things: Not to inſtance in thoſe relative notions of ſimilitude and proportion, and the conſideration of *Univerſals* which have no foundation in any thing beſide the mind it ſelf, what is it that can conclude the true magnitude of objects? For though we grant, that there is ſome picture or repreſentation of the object drawn in the bottom of the eye; yet that being farr leſs then the real proportion

portion and magnitude of the external object, it will be neceſſary that the ſoul exert ſome innate *Idola*, whereby to give an exact and perfect judgment of it. Theſe πρῶτα νοήματα, or firſt notions and apprehenſions are the foundations of all Arts and Sciences, and of all Knowledge in the World, and whatever affects us from without, doth but adminiſter ſeveral inſtances and due occaſions to the ſoul of working, and unravelling her own Uniform eſſence for the bringing into actual exiſtence this or the other Phantaſm. Wherefore in this the ſoul of man reſembles that ancient fountain of Bleſſedneſs which brought her into being; and as he by his Almighty *Fiat*, gave actual being to the multifarious forms and Idea's eternally comprehended in his Infinite Wiſdome: ſo the humane ſoul by the energy of her will commands from her central pregnancy and fecundity, ſuch Images and Idea's as by their gentle light, fairly lead her to the knowledge of her ſelf and the whole Creation. Theſe are the glaſs which repreſents the lively Images of things, and from their convenience or diſconvenience to theſe common notions ariſe their ſeveral differences and reaſons: As for example, the denominations of good

and evil, pulchritude and deformity, and all thoſe moral *Entities* ſpring not from any arbitrarious power which upon the impulſes of humour and will, can make them ceaſe to be what they are, nor do their Natures change and correſpond to the different modes of our conceptions, but remain Eternally and Immutably what we find them to be; for if they were ſo only to appearance, and not really and ſubſtantially, as ſome *Philoſophers* of old affirmed, all Moral Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs would vaniſh into empty names and words, and Wickedneſs and Evil would have nothing but a * Fantaſtick being. We are therefore to conceive an innate *Goodneſs* and *Evil* in things antecedent to our apprehenſions of them †: By the *Goodneſs* of Moral objects, I mean, their congruity, conveniency and harmony; and by *Evil*, their diſſonancy, diſconvenience and diſagreement with thoſe Eternal *Verities* or common notions God hath interwoven in the Eſſential contexture of our beings. Now becauſe the ſoul of men (not

* *Pyrrho* denyed that there was any turpitude or honeſty, juſtice or injuſtice, or any truth φύσει, but νόμῳ γὰρ καὶ ἔθει πάντα τὰς ἀνθρώπους πράττειν. *Diog. Laert. in vita Pyrrhonis.*

† Thus *Tully* ſpeaks *de Leg.* 1. *Nos ad juſtitiam eſſe natos, neq; opinione ſed Naturâ conſtitutum eſſe jus.*

And *Seneca Epiſt.* 97. *Illic diſſentiamus cum Epicuro, ubi dicit nihil juſtum eſſe naturâ, & crimina vitanda eſſe, quia vitari metus non poteſt.*

(not only in his lapſed and degenerate eſtate, wherein ſin hath defaced the workmanſhip of Gods own hands, and ſpread a cloud of death and deformity over heavens brighter Image, but in his greateſt innocency and glory, before he knew what Rebellion meant) conſiſts of a double Nature, the one meerly *Animal*, governed by ſenſe and the principles of pleaſure, and relliſhing nothing but the grateful and alluring motions of the body; and the other Intellectual and perceptive, a ray and beam let down from the Sun of heaven, and of a near cognation and affinity with the Deity; therefore I ſay, we are not to diſcriminate Moral acts by their harmony and diſſonancy with the *Animal*, but *Intellectual* man; for the proper object of the firſt is the τὸ ἡδὺ, whatſoever is pleaſant and delightſome, luſcious and ſweet, diſpreading all it's powers into the luxuriancy and exorbitancy of corporeal life: But the other more ſevere and caſtigate part of the ſouls dictates, the τὸ δέον, what ought to be done, that is, what contains in it an eternal and indiſpenſable neceſſity. Since therefore all thoſe Moral Axiomes and Propoſitions which we find treaſured up in the ſoul, are not *Thetical* and *poſitive*, as depending upon the efflux

flux of Gods will and power; but *natural* and *immutable*, and can no more be altered by him then he can die or put a period to his Exiſtence, and the intellectual faculties of men being gradual derivations and declenſions from the Divine Nature, and made up of ſuch unalterable principles, it muſt needs follow, that whatever bears an amicable correſpondence with them, ſhould be accounted as indubitable and certain, and their determinations rever'd as ſacred and holy. For ſuch is the frame and furniture of our Spirits, that they cannot become indifferent to the reception of every thing propounded to them, but are fatally and neceſſarily bound up to certain Laws and Conditions, which (as I ſaid) are the tranſcripts of the Moral Nature of God, and both guide us through the Labyrinth of the abſtruſeſt Theory, and ſerve for the exploration of whatever Doctrin either is known already, or we have great reaſon to ſuſpect to be adulterate. Theſe are the very conſtitutive and fundamental Principles of our being men, and he that is throughly conſcious of the innate Generoſity and Manlyneſs of his own mind, can no more violate any of them, then endure a painful diſciſſion and dilaceration

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of his bodily life. I confeſs there are ſome ſo ſtrangely perplext and confounded within themſelves, partly from their own depraved tempers, and partly from the diſtortion of thoſe genuine formes by an evil education, that they can ſcarce aſſent to a Mathematical Demonſtration: but yet if they would give themſelves liberty of a free enquiry into Truth, they are not uncapable of a Divorce and Separation from thoſe perverſe Principles; which can no better way be done then by ſuſpending their aſſent, and laying aſide all their old Phantaſmes and Prepoſſeſſions, till they attain to a clear and diſtinct apprehenſion of whatever it be that they converſe with; and by ſo doing they ſhall at laſt put a final ſtop to the importunate incurſions of thoſe falſe Judges, and clear themſelves from all their formerly imbibed Prejudices, and Truth will ſhine forth arrayed and deckt with her own native beauty and luſtre, and we ſhall find a laſting peace and calm within us. In the management therefore of this Argument we ſhall follow the clear duct of Reaſon, and guide our ſelves by thoſe Sacred Laws we find indelibly engraven in the centre of our beings; and in conformity to this, we ſhall lay down ſeveral Propoſitions, by which the unreaſonable-

ſonableneſs of this rigid Doctrine we are Impugning, will manifeſtly be detected.

Prop. 1. 1. *To render any being in a far worſe condition, and more miſerable ſtate, then it's nature and capacities were intended for, without any conſideration of an antecedent Crime, or Subſequent advantage accruing, meerly upon will and pleaſure, is repugnant to the light of natural Reaſon.*

There is no life ſo fallen out or diſſatisfied with it ſelf, as to ſeek it's own ruine and torment, but ſtudiouſly endeavours to aſſert it ſelf into the higheſt happineſs it's nature is capable of, and exerts and diſplayes all it's powers for the acquiſition of what is moſt congruous and ſuitable to it's internal frame and complexion: Now to diſturb the kindly actings of ſuch a being by a perverſe diſlocation of it's contexture and capacities, raiſing thereby the moſt exquiſite ſenſe of pain and torture, meerly for the ſatisfaction of an unaccountable fancy and petulant humour, what is it but to act according to the principles of the higheſt cruelty and oppreſſion? For what greater act of ferity and barbarity can

can be imagined then to vex and hurt the innocent, and that upon no other account but becauſe we will have it ſo? yea, it is judged ſo high a piece of depravity and degeneracy, that wiſe men have thought it inconſiſtent with the very nature of the Devil, to do miſchief for miſchiefs ſake. Yet ſuch a face of things do theſe *Abſolute Reprobationiſts* repreſent to the World, while they make the benigne Father of humane ſouls, to be ſo far diſpleaſed with his own dear off-ſpring, as without any fault of theirs, to detrude them from that happy ſtate wherein at firſt he made them, being capable of the reception and communication of his own Nature, into a condition of intolerable and endleſs miſery, and all this meerly upon his will and pleaſure. For ſurely the ſouls of men as they come out of the benigne hands of God, are fitted for very noble and excellent purpoſes, and may if God ſo pleaſe, acting according to their intrinſick powers, become the capable ſubjects of his boundleſs Goodneſs, and rejoyce in a cheerful contemplation of their own powers and faculties, and the Theory of the outward Creation, and in beholding the Symmetry of all things with that firſt and *Architypal Idea* according to which all things

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in their proportion were fram'd. And if beſide this, we conſider what high improvements the ſoul is capable of, and the excellency and glory of her Nature when diveſted of the rags of Mortality (an obſcure ſubindication of which we have, as well in thoſe conflicts ſhe hath with the body, wherein ſhe aſpires and elevates her ſelf to the obtaining ſomething better then ſhe now poſſeſſes, and alſo in thoſe high and raiſed preſages ſhe makes of a tranſcendent, free, and enlarged life when ſhe takes her flight from this lower world) if I ſay, we conſider the extent of her capacities, and the exquiſite pulchritude and beauty of her frame and ſtructure, it will appear an act of the higheſt unreaſonableneſs, that I may not ſay extreameſt rigour and injuſtice in the World, to render her being innocent and blameleſs the more miſerable by being once happy, and to make her condition infinitely worſe then that wherein ſhe was at firſt created, or to which ſhe is in a poſſibility of attaining. Nor can this be ſalved and cured by the αὐτὸν τάρμακον of Gods unlimited and uncontrollable Power and Dominion over his Creatures, whereby he may do with them whatever he pleaſes; For beſide that 'tis no way diſhonourable

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to Gods everbleſſed Nature to ſay, that his Will and Power are not arbitrarious and ungovernable; but regulated and ballaſted by a Supreme Goodneſs: we are not in this caſe to look for bare *Will*, which is in it ſelf a meer blind principle; but for ſomething more Soveraign, for Wiſdom and Counſel, and for ends worthy of that adorable Majeſty which not only brought into being, but perpetually intereſſes it ſelf in the affairs of the whole Creation. God cannot act below himſelf, or ſtain the beautious productions of his fertile Nature with the baſe alloy of ſelf-advantage and accruments; but alwayes works conformably to *Abſolute Goodneſs*, in which all his Actions are terminated and concluded. It was from this fertile womb that the whole Creation iſſued forth, and God can deal no otherwiſe with his Creatures then may be conſiſtent with the Eternal and Unchangeable Laws of ſo Majeſtick a principle: and if it were once concluded againſt the proud *Phariſees*, by him who is the Eſſential Wiſdom of God, That *it is better to ſave life then to deſtroy*; we may be ſure that Almighty arme which ſuſtains and governs the World, will never hurt any of mankind before they ruine and undo themſelves. Sooner may thoſe bright

Lamps

Lamps of Heaven, which are perpetually circling us, keep back and ſuſpend their beams, then the Divine Goodneſs be ſeparated from any thing that is willing to be united to him. Gods Rule and Dominion over the World is good and juſt, ἀγαθὸς γὰρ ἦν φύσει (ὁ Θεὸς) ἀγαθῷ δ' οὐδεὶς οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίνεται φθόνος, as *Hierocles* ſpeaks out of *Plato*; that is, *God being naturally and eſſentially Good, cannot poſſibly conceive any envy or hatred at the condition of any thing he has made.* He is not like the Oſtritch, which (as *Job* tells us) leaves her eggs in the ſand, and forgets that the foot may cruſh them, and hardens her ſelf againſt her young ones as if they were not hers: but exerciſes a tender care and loving Providence over the whole Creation, and ſheds a benigne influence upon his numerous iſſue. And to this the inward ſenſe of every good man bears witneſs, whoſe felicity is multiplyed by ſeeing others as happy as himſelf: and if it be a perfection in our Natures to be propenſe to mercy and compaſſion, and to do all that good which lies in our powers, then ſurely if we take a proſpect of Gods infinite and complete Goodneſs from the benigne and harmleſs temper of a vertuous and good man, we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that

that he cannot make any of the Creation miſerable without conſideration of their own default. A good man looks not upon himſelf as ſome particular being divided from the reſt of the World; but as a member of the whole Creation, which in conformity to his Great Maker, he accounts a part of his care, and graſps every degree of life within his boundleſs mind; and if it lay in his breaſt he would inveſt them with all that happineſs God made them for. And beſide, what every bountiful and benigne man experiences in himſelf, we have ſome inſtances of this Univerſal Charity left upon record. What paſſionate eruptions of ſpirit do we find in the holy men of old? *Blot me out of thy book,* ſayes *Moſes*; and, *I could wiſh my ſelf accurſed from Chriſt, for my Brethren and Kinſmen according to the fleſh,* ſayes St. *Paul*: Yea further, I am perſwaded, that if it were poſſible for a good man to be ſlain a thouſand times; yet ſo often as he revived, he would ſtill forgive the hand that ſtruck him: and which is yet more, he could be content (if it might ſtand with the goodneſs of God) to lie in Hell to all Eternity, ſo that he might be without ſin, rather then that any of the ſons of men ſhould be forever excluded

and debarr'd from the love and favour of God. And now do but compare this Noble and Heroical Spirit, with that inexhausted fountain of Goodness which is concentred in the Essence of the Deity; and we shall soon see, that God is so far from making any of his innocent Creatures miserable; that, acting according to the eternal laws of his own Nature, he must necessarily consult the good and welfare of them all. God is *Essential Goodness*, an immense Ocean of love, which knows no bounds nor limits: Man is only good by participation, and his greatest perfection is but a derivative ray from that spotless Orbe of light and glory. Man can but wish and desire the accomplishment and perfect establishment of every thing in that happiness 'tis capable of; but it is in the Power of God not only to wish all things happy: but if he please, to make them really so. What is there then left but the malignity and bitterness of peevish Spirits to hinder or discountenance the Universal happiness of the whole World? I wish therefore that the strenuous asserters of Gods ὑπεροχὴ and unaccountable Dominion over his Creatures, would take heed, that under pretence of magnifying his Power, they do not derogate from those more excellent perfections of

of his Nature, Wiſdom and Goodneſs. There are certain immutable and unchangeable laws fixed and radicated in the very centre of the Deity, and which he can no more ſwerve from, then he can ceaſe to be; and Goodneſs being the firſt pregnant root of all things, cannot fail of acting according to it's Eſſential plenitude and exuberancy; that is, of communicating it's ſelf to all capable ſubjects, as the light cannot withhold from darting it's beams through the pervious air.

And here I cannot omit to recite thoſe blaſphemous Poſitions which have been maintained by ſome rigid *Calviniſts*, that the World may ſee how farr men may put out the light of their Natural Reaſons by prejudice and paſſion, and yet avouch their *Dogmata* as Oraculous.

Amyraldus apud Curcellæum de jure Dei in Creaturas innocentes, Cap. 7. *Hoc igitur ex iſtâ* Jobi *hiſtoriâ colligimus; licere Deo ſi vellet, ab illo jure quod poſitum eſt* ἐν τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ, *ea facere quæ ab Arminianis injuſta eſſe judicantur —— Cauſa enim certè illius erit in Majeſtatis eminentiâ immenſâ; quæ quia immenſa eſt, præſtabit ex æquo, ut quæ minus & quæ magis injuſta ſunt, facere poſſit* ἀνθρώπως. *Statue igitur quantamlibet injuſtitiæ magnitudinem*

in eo quòd creatura inſons addicitur cruciatibus æternis: attamen id ſi Deus faciat, Majeſtatis quæ in ipſo eſt magnitudo, actionem ab omni reprehenſione aut coërcitione vindicabit.

So likewiſe *Szydlovius in Præfat. ad Vindic.* as he is cited by the ſame Author, *Dico hic ingenuè, qd. ſcil. Deus & poſſit unius peccatum alteri imputatum morte æternâ punire, & poſſit ad interitum ordinare, obligare hominem ad impoſsibile, & ob non præſtitum hoc quod ei dare non decrevit, eundem punire: Quod velit peccatum: Quod prohibendo aliquid, contrarium ejus facere ipſemet poſſit: Quod quæ velit ideò juſta ſint, quia vult, non verò ideò velle quia juſta ſint,* &c. *Quæ omnia cùm veriſſima ſint; ideò tantò periculoſius negata fuerùnt, quantò propius (ut ſic dicam) Dei poteſtatem extenuabant & enervabant.*

Theſe Poſitions are ſo full of horrid conſequences, ſo inconſiſtent with the bleſſed Nature of God, and ſo contrariant with the natural and eaſie Idea's of our minds, that it ſhall be enough to have tranſcribed them. In the mean time it highly concerns every Good man to think as honorably of God as poſſibly he can, and render his apprehenſions of that adorable Being, amiable and lovely; for the time will come when God will unmask all the

falſe

falſe and unworthy conceptions men have entertained of him, and vindicate his abuſed Glory from all the defiled ſpots they have ſullied it with, and diſcover to them their perverſe and obſtinate Errors, by a light clear as the noon day, and every one ſhall be aſhamed that hath not thought ſo magnificently of his Nature as he ought to do.

But here I foreſee it will be Objected by ſome, That ſince none of mankind can be *good* to God as advantaging him any thing, and the ſole end of their Creation being for their own good and happineſs, that benign Author conſidering what and how he had made them, and what was likely to be the ſad doom of moſt of them by revolting from his bleſſed life through the neceſſary imperfection of their Natures (Lapſability being eſſentially interwoven in the very contexture of their beings) he ſhould be obliged through the infinite fertility of that principle of Love out of which he made them, and which delights not in the calamity of any of the Creation, to have made them *impeccable*, that ſo they might never have loſt thoſe beautiful forms he engraved in them, and conſequently never incurr'd the ſeverity of his diſpleaſure.

And here, that I may keep my ſelf within the bounds of ſober Theology, and determine nothing inconſiſtent to thoſe Sacred Oracles whoſe Authority ought to be tenderly regarded: I anſwer,

1. That God making all things according to their reſpective Idea's, which eternally ſhone in his Allcomprehenſive Wiſdom, it became neceſſary that he ſhould bring into being ſuch lapſable Creatures as the ſouls of men; for there being a fair poſſibility of ſuch intermediate Eſſences as humane ſouls, which ſhould be ſomething below the Nature of Angels, and yet ſuperiour to Bruts; and the Divine Fecundity being ſuch as (to ſpeak with reverence) did neceſſarily conſtrain him to expand his infinite Plenitude in the production of whatever included no incompoſibility of Exiſtence, it is not to be imagined that his Nature ſhould be leſs fruitful then the conceptions and apprehenſions of men, who can diſtinctly and rationally place another *Species* of Beings, and fill up that empty *Chaſme* between thoſe two ſo vaſtly diſtant degrees of life, Angels and Beaſts. And therefore if men had been made Impeccable, there would want ſuch an order of Creatures in the World, as might with thoſe glorious *Morning-ſtarrs* actuate

actuate a body of an Ethereal and heavenly conſiſtency, and yet with Brute-Animals be furniſhed with a congruity to inform courſer matter, and appear upon the earth clothed with fleſh and blood.

2. God who is in himſelf a full and compleat Happineſs, did likewiſe grant to all the productions of life, a power of exerting thoſe faculties his bountiful hand beſtowed upon them, and ſo of enjoying themſelves in the free uſe and exerciſe of them, and like an indulgent Father permitted them the pleaſures and gratifications of every degree of life he had placed in them; ſo that it ſeems a Benefit or Sacred Donative collated on mankind, that they were not ſtated in an inamiſſible Happineſs. For though we ſhould ſay with ſome, that ſuch is the Nature and Fabrick of humane ſouls, that unleſs we engage Divine Power in a perpetual Miracle, they could not be conſtituted in an Illapſable condition; yet that All-knowing mind foreſaw, that the calamity which many of them were like to undergo by deſerting their primitive Happineſs, was not ſufficient to out-ballance the good which might accrue to themſelves and the reſt of the Creation in their production;

for albeit they were made Lapſable, yet it was no wayes neceſſary that they ſhould actually recede from their bleſſed life, and it was only their careleſs and negligent uſe of Gods paternal bounty in taking to themſelves too great a liberty of enjoying the pleaſures reſulting from Corporeal life, which were allowed them in due meaſures and degrees, whereby the Animadverſion was too farr called off from a ſteady obſervance of the Commands and Laws of the Divine life, that turned *Adam* and the reſt of his Off-ſpring out of a Paradiſiacal felicity into a World of briers and thorns. But beſide this, God eternally beholding in himſelf the Idea's of ſuch mutable creatures, which being brought into Being, would afterwards ruine themſelves, did as it were on ſet purpoſe interweave many acerbities and incommodities in the ſtructure of their beings, which might check and reſtrain their otherwiſe exorbitant luſts, when they are ſeducing them to an eaſie deſcent, and ſeaſonably remind them of that better ſtate they are *apoſtatizing* from. Laſtly, God beholding the lapſe and degeneracy of humane ſouls, and conſidering that it ſomewhat proceeded from that *incompoſſibility* he himſelf had wrought in their Eſſential ſtructure,

ſtructure, he determined to ſend down upon earth the Meſſias, whoſe pure and immaculate ſoul never left the bright Manſions of Innocency with the reſt of his degenerate Brethren, to the intent that he might declare to fallen men, the unfeigned deſire and will of God, to re-inſtate them in the poſſeſſion of their ancient glory; and in purſuance of this good intention of his, to aſſure them of the powerful conduct of his everbleſſed Spirit, which ſhould be in them a never-failing principle of life, both in this World, and the other. Thus we ſee, that notwithſtanding the infinite fulneſs of the Divine Goodneſs, abundantly ſhed abroad upon the whole Creation; yet was not God at all obliged to create man *impeccable.*

2. *To determine by an abſolute and poſitive act the Happineſs of ſome, and the Miſery of others, and yet to Decree the ſame upon condition of their Obedience or Diſobedience, is inconſiſtent with the light of Reaſon.* Prop. 2.

That the ſame thing be both Abſolute and Conditional, is as great a contradiction as can be imagined; and therefore to decree a benefit to any perſon abſolutely and

and without any reſpect whatever, and yet to propoſe the ſame under certain terms and conditions of acting, muſt needs be of the ſame Nature. But here that the Aſſerters of Gods Abſolute Decrees concerning the Salvation and Damnation of particular perſons, might ſave the credit of their *Doctrin* from thoſe *abſurdities* it lies obnoxious to, they have invented a pretty Subterfuge, and they tell us, That God doth irreſiſtably work the condition in thoſe whom he intends to ſave. And what is this but to make God a προσωποληπτης, one that acts upon ſuch arbitrarious Principles, as every wiſe man would be aſhamed to own in the conduct of his life and actions? 'Tis very ſtange to ſee how men will labor and toil to ſupport and keep up a ruinous fabrick, which if let fall, would aſſuredly prove an advantage to the Chriſtian world: but ſurely God needs no ſuch Patrons to defend the righteouſneſs and equity of his dealing with the ſons of men, and I may ſay to them as once *Job* expoſtulated with his Friends, *Will ye ſpeak wickedly for God? or talk deceitfully for him? will you accept his perſon? This is*, as he afterwards tels them, *to mock God, as one man mocketh another*. For if he determine ſalvation to men *hypothetically*; that is, with reſpect to their obe-

obedience, and he himſelf work the condition in them by a ſupervenient and irreſiſtable force, How can they be ſaid in propriety of ſpeech to have performed it? and, how can their Obedience (if it can be called ſo) be termed an act of their duty (which is alwayes in reſpect of a Superior) when they themſelves are wholly paſſive? Wherefore, according to this rate of ſpeaking, God muſt be ſaid to reward himſelf. Laſtly, He that promiſes a reward upon condition of Obedience, ſuppoſes the perſon to be in a capacity of diſobeying, and the reward is added as an incitation to quicken and actuate his Obedience; otherwiſe it will be as ridiculous as to confer a benefit upon a man if he will breathe: for the man is no more able to diſobey, then a ſtone not to fall downward, or flame not to aſcend. Now if God tranſact the whole buſineſs by his Almighty and never-failing Power, without any the leaſt attempts or offers of man towards it, how is he left in a poſſibility of diſobeying? and, What need there any reward be adjudged to man for the performance of that which God intends to bring to perfection without his co-operation or endeavours? So on the otherſide, Is it not a ſtrange diſpenſation, and wholly

un-

unworthy the God of Truth, thus to deceive his Creatures, by telling them, that they are the cauſe of their own ruine, and that it is only their own obſtinate and perverſe wills which deprive them of that Bleſſedneſs he prepared for them, and cauſe them to inherit bitterneſs and ſorrow, when he did by an Antecedent and Inconditionate Decree, deſtinate and mark them out to an Eternal Miſery? The truly knowing Spirit will not be put off with Pageantry and fair ſhows; but will look for ſomething ſolid and ſubſtantial, which may be indeed πρόσφατος, worthy of that Excellent Goodneſs and Wiſdom, which brought into being the beautiful frame of Heaven and Earth. If ſuch ſhifts therefore as theſe may paſs for currant at the Great day of God, I cannot ſee how Wicked mens mouths can be ſtopped, and the whole unrighteous World become ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ, *Subject and obnoxious to the juſt Judgment of God.* For, how eaſie is it for them to plead an exemption from Puniſhment, although they never performed the conditions of the Goſpel; becauſe the ſame abſolute and peremptory Will which of old deſigned their deſtruction, did likewiſe perfectly diſable them from doing any thing that might

might conduce to their Happineſs? and, *What were they that they could withſtand God?*

3. *To command men to Act according to a Law under a certain and ſevere Puniſhment, and yet to take away all Power and Ability of Acting according to the Tenor of that Law, is contrary to the dictates of Right Reaſon.* Prop. 3.

That I may fully clear this Propoſition, I ſhall go by theſe Gradations.

1. That men may reaſonably come under any Obligation by a Law, it is neceſſary that that Law be Promulgated, otherwiſe it is no Law, nor can it reach or have influence upon any mans perſon; for the Promulgation of it is an Eſſential qualification of a Law, according to that known *Maxime* of the Canon Law, *Leges Conſtituuntur cùm Promulgantur: Laws are then Conſtituted when they are Promulgated:* And that of the Civilians, *Leges quæ conſtringunt hominum vitas, intelligi ab omnibus debent; Thoſe Laws which have influence upon Mens lives, ought to be underſtood of all.* Thus among the *Romans*, the manner of publiſhing a Law, after it had been approved and recorded, was,

was, by hanging it up in Tables of Braſs in their Market-places, or at their Church doors, as *Tacitus* in his *Annals* reports; whence *legem figere*, is to Enact and Eſtabliſh a Law. Hence it is that the *Jewiſh* Law has no obligation upon *Chriſtians*, becauſe it was Promulgated only to them, and ſo became peculiar to their Nation, *Audi Iſrael, Hear O Iſrael*; and if any part of it have influence now upon the Chriſtian World, it muſt be becauſe it is repeated anew by the Son of God, the great νομοθέτης of the Chriſtian Oeconomy; for whatever is contained in it beſide, conformable to the laws and dictates of Nature, obliges us not as given by *Moſes*, but by virtue of that antecedent Univerſal law common to all rational beings. Nor was the *Heathen* World at all concerned in the *Jewiſh* Diſcipline, upon the ſame account, becauſe it was reſtrained and confined to the *Judaical Republick*; for had it been of an Univerſal extent, there is no doubt but it would have been publiſhed to the *Pagans* alſo; and the *Jewiſh* Prophets when they reprehended the *Heathen* Kings for their enormities, would likewiſe have taken notice of this in eſpecial manner, that they did not conform to the Diſcipline of the *Jewiſh* Church, and accordingly

cordingly ſharply reproved them for it, which we never find they did at any time.

2. That a Law may have force and obligation upon Men, and they be reaſonably puniſhed for the tranſgreſſion of it, 'tis requiſite that it be ſo framed, that every man who hears of it, may know by ſome general or particular notices whether he be concerned and intereſſed in it or no.

Our bleſſed Lord having finiſhed all things committed to him on Earth, and being now to enter into his glory, gave command to his Diſciples and Apoſtles to Preach the Goſpel πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει, *to the whole Creation of mankind*; by which he ſufficiently evidenced, that it was his mind and will, that all the World, to whom it ſhould come, ſhould yield obedience to this his Evangelical Inſtitution; for he addes, *Whoever believes and is Baptized, ſhall be ſaved: but he that believes not, ſhall be damned:* wherefore every man muſt look upon himſelf concern'd in this holy Diſpenſation. But according to the *Calviniſtical* Doctrine, Reprobates cannot in reaſon be puniſhed for their non-ſubmiſſion or violation of the Evangelical Law, becauſe they are no way included under

under it; not in their perſonal capacities, as being not by name ſpecified in it; nor under any general terms, for the Goſpel (ſay they) was not given to Reprobates, to the intent that they ſhould be ſaved by their obedience of it: but the miniſtra on of it is continued meerly upon the account and intereſt of thoſe few Elect, whom the Divine Pleaſure intended by a fair and irreſiſtable gale to carry into the Port of Eternal Bliſs and Felicity. Wherefore this new and perfect Law, ſeems not at all obligatory to Reprobates; for, how can they be ſaid to be damned for not obeying the Goſpel, when they were from all Eternity deſtin'd to deſtruction by an irreſpective and irrevocable Decree?

3. That a Law may be Obligatory, 'tis neceſſary that it injoyn nothing but what is poſſible to be performed *, both in reference to the preſent capacities of the intereſſed perſons, and in reſpect of the matter or things themſelves commanded in it.

That no man is bound to impoſſibilities, is as indubitable in Morals, as the circulation of the blood in Medicks, or the regular motion of the Planets around their centre

* *Solon apud Plutarchum,* δεῖ δὲ πρὸς τὸ δυνατὴ γράφεσθαι τὸν νόμον, εἰ βούλεται χρεσίμως ὀλίγους ἀλλὰ μὴ πολλοὺς ἀχρήστως κολάζειν.

centre in Natural Philoſophy: God cannot therefore in Equity command, nor in Reaſon expect, that an impure and unholy perſon who is alive only to the brutiſh life, ſhould of a ſudden leap from this frail and periſhing ſtate of Mortality, into that exalted and *Deiform* condition of the Spirits of juſt men made perfect; becauſe there is an impoſſibility contained in the command, conſidering the incapacity of the Perſon for ſuch a ſudden undertaking, his faculties being broken and disjoynted, which require time to be ſet in order, and recover their ſtrength again; and withall bearing in mind, the power and vigour of the life of ſenſe and corporeity, which is ſo great that it's lovely contrary like an oppreſſed Prince, can only continue it's juſt and rightful claim to the Empire and Soveraignty of the mans mind, but cannot attain to the full and compleat poſſeſſion of it's dominions, till after a long and tedious diſpute with the unrighteous Nature, and it's treacherous Adherents. Should the All-wiſe Governor of the World command men *to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles*, Reaſon it ſelf would admit of their Apology, in that the matter would not admit it, there was an impoſſibility in the caſe, conſidering the

Natures and Proprieties of things. In like manner, to apply this to the *Decree* of *Abſolute Reprobation*: Can God in juſtice expect the fruit of Righteouſneſs from thoſe forlorn creatures, whom he hath made a prey to a certain ruine, when his bleſſed hands never vouchſafed to ſow the ſeed of his preventing and exciting Grace toward the completion of any living formation? Can he expoſtulate with them that they did not walk in the ancient paths of Truth and Vertue, when he himſelf turned them out of that good way by a fatal Decree, into the dark and miry tracts of ſin, where yet his benigne eyes ſaw them lie groveling, and refuſed to put under his compaſſionate arme to raiſe them up? Can he, without *Hipocriſie*, invite them to drink of the waters of life freely, and puniſh them for not coming to thoſe ſalutary ſtreams when he has deprived them of their leggs, the principles of ſpiritual motion, which ſhould convey them thither? The good *Samaritan* in the Goſpel, was commended for lending a Charitable heart and hand to the calamitous perſon that fell among Thieves: But theſe make God to be leſs pitiful to his Creatures; nay, to have leſs Juſtice than an ordinary man, by repreſenting him coming to the Wounded ſouls

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of *Reprobates*, and commanding them to perform his will, and act their parts in the Family of the New Creation, when he himself had afore contrived to send them as a prey to Thieves, who stript them of their raiment, and so deeply wounded them, as that they quickly became destitute of all sense and motion, and almost life it self. How unreasonable a thing is it, if any thing in the World deserve that Name; for God to punish men for not lifting up themselves upon the wings of faith and love, and taking their flight towards the *New Jerusalem*, when he himself has made them *Apterites*, and dispoyled them of their plumes, and yet will not scatter the dewy influences of heaven, nor suffer his clearing life to fall on them, that they may spring again? Can it be suitable to that blessed Being all whose actions are just and righteous, and whose Nature is that living law of Equity, according to which the whole World is governed, to command Impossibilities, and call men to an account for what was not in their Power to perform? The *Stoick* judged this unworthy the Deity, in that interrogation, τίνος οὖν ὑπάθυνόν σε ἐποίησαν; (*viz.* θεοὶ) τοῦ μόνον ὄντος ἐπί σοι; and if it may pass for a piece of warrantable Justice in the Righteous *Arrian. Epict. l. 1. c. 12.*

Governor of the World to require that at our hands, which we never were inabled to do, there will be no ſecurity left of our future ſubſiſtence, much leſs that we ſhall be happy in the other life. Yet in ſuch an Aſpect as this we may behold the Doctrine of *Abſolute Reprobation*, and being ſuch in the main parts and lineaments of it, there is no man but may eaſily judge of the whole. And if you will have a caſt of ſomething to this purpoſe Mr. *Calvin* himſelf will furniſh you, *Ecce vocem ad eos dirigit, ſed ut magis obſurdeſcant; lucem accendit, ſed ut reddantur cæciores; doctrinam profert, ſed quâ magis obſtupeſcant; remedium adhibet, ſed nè ſanentur:* that is, *He calls to them,* (*viz.* God to Reprobates) *but 'tis on purpoſe that they may be more deaf; he ſets a light before them, that by that luſter they may be more blind; he layes down a Doctrine, that he may more confound and amaze them; laſtly, he applies a remedy, but with this intent, that it may not heal them.* And will you think this worthy and becoming the Majeſty of that Good and Juſt God, who hath taken ſuch ſtrange and unimaginable wayes to make his Creatures happy, and who dayly woes the Sons of Men with arguments of the greateſt weight and ſerioufneſs to accept

Inſtit lib. 3. cap. 24. Sect. 13.

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his offered Salvation? I cannot but ſpeak, and it were a crime to be ſilent, when the glory of heaven thus lies at ſtake, the honour of my Creator trampled in the duſt, and the ſpotleſs purity and holineſs of his Nature ſullyed and defiled by the impure conceptions of unhallowed judgments: *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth*, while I plead the cauſe of the *holy One*, who is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, againſt the ignorant zeal of inconſiderate perſons, who under pretence of doing honor to his Name, do really render that admirable contrivance of God in the Goſpel, than which nothing was ever communicated to the World more full of incomprehenſible Wiſdom, the moſt unreaſonable project in the choiceſt parts of it, that ever was ſet on foot among the Sons of men! Do you think the *Eternal Logos* or Reaſon of God, would declare a Doctrine to the World that ſhould be in all points, of all his numerous iſſue only unlike the Father; that is, that the Goſpel alone, among all the projections and contrivances of that *All-comprehenſive* Wiſdom ſhould be found unreaſonable? Reflect a while upon the Heroick Generoſity, and Innate Nobility of your own Spirits, and let not your conceptions of God and his Works dwindle

away into childiſh Words and Names, nor ſtifle and ſuppreſs any noble ſentiments by perverſe altercations about terms; but let a manly ſpirit poſſeſſe your breaſts, and look upon men as rational Creatures, the compoſure of whoſe ſouls, I mean their Intellectual frame, is ſuch, that every thing is not a congruous and proportionate object of their inward ſenſe, and it is not in their power to receive Truth and Falſhood alike; but as the eye cannot behold the ſun ἡλιοειδὴς μὴ γενόμενον, unleſs it have ſome reſemblance of the Sun it ſelf; ſo neither can the ſoul, without a great deal of moleſtation and regreat, embrace what is not congenerous to it's rational Nature. And as it is in Nature, every Plant is not adapted to entertain every particle that comes to nouriſh it, but admits only ſuch as are *conſimilar* to it's own pores; ſo the ſpirit of man being rational in all the ducts and lineaments of it's moral ſtructure, cannot acquieſce in any thing that is irrational, nor receive any Doctrine but what is homogeneal to it's inward temper. Conſider this I ſay, and judge of the Doctrins you ſo earneſtly contend for by this *Index* and Rule, and remember, that ſo often as you propound any of the *Dogmata* of Chriſtianity either as unreaſonable in themſelves,

ſelves, or make them appear ſo to others by your unwary and irrational Explication of them, you become treacherous to your Saviour by hindring as much as in you lies, thoſe good effects he intended by the Propogation of the Goſpel throughout the World, and you likewiſe do violence to the Nature of Mankind, by impoſing upon them what is plainly repugnant thereto. But I fear I have been too luxuriant in this ſudden, though not wholly impertinent Excurſion; I ſhall therefore immediately fall upon the laſt Propoſition, which is,

4. *That to Create and bring into Being on purpoſe to deſtroy and make miſerable, is moſt irrational.* Prop. 4.

There is no Being whether meerly Senſitive or Rational too, but by a natural ſympathy and propenſion, loves and takes care for it's own off-ſpring: The Beaſts of the field, and the Fowls of the air, bear a tenderneſs and affection towards their young, and never caſt of the care and protection of them, till time have enabled them to ſhift for themſelves: The *Hircanian* Tygers never diſcover the fierceneſs of their cruel natures more vehemently

and paſſionately, than when they are in danger of being bereaved of their whelps. Thus have I ſeen a Serpent pull down the neſt, and devoure the young ones of a little Bird before her eyes, while the innocent damme, not daring to come nigh, and yet unwilling to flie away, ſuffers a pretty controverſie between love and fear within her breaſt; continually environing her more powerful adverſary by many circular flights, and powring out in vain her pitiful complaints into thoſe inſenſible ears, till the cruel beaſt hath eaten up her loving care and charge, and then ſhe mourns and makes the trees participate of her grief, and often with ſad notes viſits the place where lay the tragick Scene of her lateſt ſorrows. Should we aſcend to men who bear the ſimilitude of heaven, even the moſt barbarous not excepted, they all have a more regular care and love to their off-ſpring than brute Animals, inaſmuch as they partake of a higher degree of life, and have the principles of Reaſon ſeated in them: And can any tender and compaſſionate Father behold without a relenting and bleeding heart, his only Son racked or maſſacred before his eyes, to ſatisfie the bruriſh paſſion of ſome blood-thirſty Tyrant? Shall frail

frail men then be a precedent of love and tenderneſs to his Maker? Shall God, whoſe love is alwayes amiable and ſerene, without the leaſt diſturbance or cloud of paſſion, be leſs pitiful to what he hath brought into being, then frail and imperfect mortals? It was a prevalent argument which *Moſes* uſed in the behalf of the murmuring and diſcontented *Iſraelites*, That if God proceeded againſt them in fury, to their utter undoing, *the Nations which had heard his fame would ſay, Becauſe the Lord was not able to bring his people into the land which he ſware unto them, therefore he hath ſlain them in the Wilderneſs:* and may not the ſame infamous obloquie, with a farr more ſpecious pretext, be caſt upon the righteous Providence of God, while in diſpleaſure he perſecutes to the death his innocent Progeny: That becauſe he was not able to maintain them in that happineſs he deſigned them for, he hath by an unalterable law fixed their eternal miſery and deſtruction. The ancient Philoſopher *Pherecides* taught, that God transformed himſelf into Love, when he brought into being the whole Creation; and ſurely that Love which moved him firſt to act, cannot be thought to degenerate ſo far from it's Nature, as to be buſied in contriving Numb. 14. 15, 16.

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the ruin of what is so newly brought forth. And though the Ancients did veil and obscure their choicest Mysteries in Fables and Ænigmatical Symbols, yet the intelligent inquirer may gather many substantial truths from them, which being in themselves so coherent with the Divine Oracles, seem to be a firm indication of Gods love and affection to the Sons of Men, and that Providence being never excluded from any time or place, did in all ages and parts of the World, raise up such considerable persons, and every way furnish them with gifts and abilities, as might serve as instruments in her hand, to teach and instruct mankind in the true knowledge and worship of the Deity. Hence it is, that in the Gentile Theology, *Love* is made the most ancient of the Gods, and the Sire of all things *, and is described by *Simmias Rhodius* in a pair of Wings, which suited well with the Symbolical representation of the *Chaos*, by an Egge which was brooded and hatched under these wings of Love. Something of this we find *Aristophanes* in *Avibus* sporting withal,

* *Plutarch* tells us, that for this reason *Hesiod* made *Love* the most ancient of the Gods, ἵνα πάντα δ' ἐκεῖνον μετάσχῃ γενέσεως.

Χάος

Χάος ἦν καὶ Ἐρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς·
Γῆ δ' οὐδ' ἀήρ, οὐδ' οὐρανὸς ἦν· Ἐρέβοις δ' ἐν ἀπείρασι κόλποις
Τίκτει πρώτιστον ὑπηνέμιον Νύξ ἡ μελανόπτερος ὠόν,
Ἐξ οὗ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις ἔβλαστεν Ἔρως ὁ ποθεινὸς
Στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν, εἰκὼς ἀνεμώδεσι δίναις.
Οὗτος δὲ χάει πτερόων μιχθεὶς νυχίῳ κατὰ Τάρταρον εὐρὺν
Ἐνεόττευσεν γένος ἡμέτερον δὲ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν εἰς φῶς.
Πρότερον δ' οὐκ ἦν γένος ἀθανάτων πρὶν Ἔρως συνέμιξεν ἅπαντα,
Ξυμμιγνυμένων δ' ἑτέρων ἑτέροις γένετ' οὐρανὸς ὠκεανός τε
Καὶ γῆ, πάντων τε θεῶν μακάρων γένος ἄφθιτον.

This Love therefore, according to their Divinity, being the benigne Creator of all things, the Father of Men and Angels, from whose bounteous fecundity, the vast spaces of the external Creation became replenished with suitable inhabitants, must needs be ever present with every thing he hath brought into being, and communicate himself to all his Creatures, so far as their respective Natures are capable of receiving the influxes of his Paternal Goodness. What was therefore obscurely and imperfectly delivered by the Heathens, concerning the production of things, we have fully declared in the *Mosaical* history of the Creation; where we find the Holy Spirit of Love, by his fostering incubation, bringing into being, and cherishing under his extended wings, the new-born World.

World. Which manner of production ſurely denotes, a tender care and dear regard of whatever is brought into being; and therefore the Metaphorical expreſſion of Wings is often uſed in Sacred Writ, to ſet forth Gods loving care and providence; *Pſal.* xci. 4. *He ſhall cover thee with his feathers*, when thou betakeſt thy ſelf under the ſhadow of his wings. And when the bleſſed Jeſus would denote that dear love wherewith he would have embraced *Jeruſalem*, had ſhe returned unto him, he tels us, that *he would have gathered her children together* ὃν τρόπον ἐπιτυνάγει ὄρνις τὰ νοσσία ἑαυτῆς ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας, *as a bird gathereth her young under her wings*, Mat, 23. 37. God cannot be ſeparated from any of mankind, but as he brought them into being for no other end but that they might taſte of the communications of his Nature, ſo he takes care that none of them ſhall fall ſhort of this deſirable end, but through their own default. Ὁ μὲν πάντων πατὴρ ὁ νοῦς (ſaith *Triſmegiſt.*) ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φύσις ἀπεκύησε τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἴσον ἑαυτῷ, ὃν ἠγάπησεν ὡς ἴδιον υἱόν· i. e. *That mind which is the Father of all things, being life and nature it ſelf, produced man like unto himſelf, and loved him as his own off-ſpring.* But far ſhort of this comely Idea of the Divine Nature is that of *Calvin*, who had

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he been to deſcribe the barbarous ſtratagem of ſome cruel *Nero*, or one more inhumane than the World hath yet known, contrived to ſlay the innocent under colour of Juſtice, could ſcarce have done it with more horror and amazement, than that wherein he layes down the eternal counſel of God againſt Reprobates; *Quemadmodum ſua erga electos vocationis efficacia, ſalutem ad quam eos æterno conſilio deſtinaret, perficit Deus: ita ſua habet adverſus reprobos judicia, quibus conſilium de illis ſuum exequatur. Quos ergo in vitæ contumeliam & mortis exitium creavit, ut iræ ſuæ organa forent & ſeveritatis exempla; eos, ut in finem ſuum perveniant nunc audiendi verbi ſui facultate privat: nunc ejus prædicatione magis excæcat & obſtupefacit:* i. e. *As God by the efficacy of his Vocation towards the Elect, compleates that Salvation to which he deſigned them by an eternal decree; ſo he hath his determinations againſt Reprobates by which he executes his decree concerning them. Thoſe therefore whom he created for the reproach of life and perdition of death, that they might become the inſtruments of Anger, and examples of his Severity; thoſe, that they may arive to their end, he ſometimes deprives of the means of hearing his Word,* Inſtit. lib. 3. cap. 24. Sect. 12.

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and othertimes more blinds and amazes by the preaching of it. But is the Name of a Creator, nay of a Father no more promiſing? Why was Man made in the Image of God, unleſs he intended to deal with him according to that relation he ſtood in unto him? We do not read, that God hath dealt thus with any of the reſt of the Creation; for the rebellious Devils were not caſt down from the higher regions of light and glory, till they apoſtatiz'd from God, and drew with them the race of Mankind: And ſhall Man alone, the nobleſt part of that Creation to which God once vouchſafed that cheerful *Elogium* and Approbation, *that it was very good*, ſhall he only, I ſay, be baniſhed from the participation of that All-comprehenſive Goodneſs? I can ſooner therefore believe that the proud Gyant, the fanciful Poets have placed under mount *Ætna*, ſhould by his own native effort, throw of that heavy burden from his oppreſſed breaſt, or that the ſpirit of Nature ſhould convert a flinty rock into a heap of fragrant flowers, than that God ſhould create any of Mankind, on purpoſe to make them the pitious objects of others ſcorn, and his own powerful and implacable vengeance. I can never believe any thing, I ſay, that ſavours

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of ſuch irrational and unjuſt proceedings; but rather affirm, that the Eternal benignity of the Holy one, diffuſed and communicated through the whole Orbe of beings, and comprehenſion of Nature, will ſo certainly take hold of every thing that is capable of enjoying it, that it ſhall not fail of being happy, ſo long as it acts evenly and regularly in that place and ſtate infinite Wiſedom hath allotted to it. Hence *Syneſius*:

Τί δὲ θαῦμα, θεὸν
Τὸν κοσμοτέχναν,
Ἰδίων ἔργων
Κῆρας ἀφύκειν;

Hymn 3.

What wonder is't, if God
Who did the World create,
From his own works repel
All ſad and evil fate.

As if it were contradictory to the very Nature of God to be the *Demiurgus* and Maker of all things, and yet not to render his productions as happy as the capacities of their natures will admit: For nothing advantageth him ought, and all the happineſs or miſery the Creatures run through in the courſe and order of things, is neither

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an addition nor detraction of his felicity; only he being *Eſſential Love*, which envies not, nor thinks any evill, delights to communicate of himſelf in effects of kindneſs, tenderneſs and beneficence to all beings round about him. The whole Creation taſtes of it, having all it's parts cemented with Goodneſs, and it's foundation lay'd in Love. The Heavens, the Earth and Sea, and whatever moves within the compaſs of them, bear witneſs to this Truth: This is that All-mighty Love which feeds the young Ravens when they open their mouths towards heaven; and provides for the *Lybian* Lyons when their ſouls are pincht with hunger, and they roar after their prey: He it is that opens the windows of heaven, and refreſhes the dry and parched Earth; cauſing the graſs to grow for the Cattel, and herb for the ſervice of Man: All things in their order wait upon him, and he ſcatters his bounty in the midſt of them, and by a provident care looks down from Heaven and tends all his charge, ſo that not a Sparrow cloſeth it's wings on Earth, but that watchful eye obſérves it's fall. And 'tis very ſtrange, that thoſe armes which fold and embrace every thing that exerts any faculty and degree of life, ſhould be employed in plunging

ing humane souls while innocent and undefiled, into woe and misery *, and that to Eternal ages: Where is that love and pity which all Creatures proclaim to be in their *Soveraign Lord* and *Maker?* And if it were an Almighty Goodness that brought them into being, surely the same Goodness being never disjoyned from an All-comprehensive Wisdom which beheld the Natures, mutual relations and dependences of all Creatures, would have judged it fitter never to have brought them into being, then that they should be made perpetually unhappy so soon as ever they were created.

* Δέον ἐμπεδῶς πεπεῖσθαι ὅτι οὔτε τὸ ἀγαθὸν βλάπτει ποτὲ, οὔτε τὸ κακὸν ὠφελεῖ. Porphyr. l. 2. περὶ ἐμψ. ἀποχ.

To conclude this Argument, Our Religion being in all the parts of it highly reasonable, as being propounded to rational natures, in whom there are manifest Idea's and notions of Eternal verity, and they being so deeply sealed upon them, that it is neither in their power to obliterate, nor without great reluctancy receive any thing repugnant to them, it will appear from the nature of the thing it self, that there can be no such absolute Decree of Reprobation as some pretend.

Chap. III.

The third Argument taken from the Conſideration of the Moral Nature of God; from whence are deduced ſuch legitimate Inferences and Concluſions as diametrally oppoſe the Doctrine of Inconditionate Reprobation.

TO ſpeak worthily and becomingly of that adorable Being, to whom we and all creatures elſe owe not only our Exiſtence, but our preſent ſubſiſtence and conſervation in the ſeveral ſtates of life wherein we are, and to have right apprehenſions of his Nature *, as it is a great piece of our duty, ſo it ſpirits and invigorates our minds to manly and generous attempts, and leads us to the knowledge of the moſt conſiderable Theories in Nature and Providence. For whether we conſider the exuberant plenitude

* This is made by *Epictetus*, cap. 38. a Prolepſis of Religion, ἴδιον ὅτι τὸ κυριώτατον ἐκεῖνό ἐστιν, ὄρθας ὑπολήψεις περὶ θεῶν ἔχειν, ὡς ὄντων, καὶ διοικούντων τὰ ὅλα καλῶς καὶ δικαίως.

plenitude and fecundity of the Divine Goodneſs, which cannot but communicate it ſelf to the utmoſt capacities of things; or the fathomleſs depth of that Wiſdom, which hath framed the whole world with ſuch curious and exquiſite Artifice, that the moſt perſpicacious wit cannot find the leaſt flaw in that beautious ſtructure, and yet was able to produce it after another manner beyond our conceptions, if he had ſo pleaſed; or whether we weigh the infinity of the Divine Power, which is able to effect any thing that implies no contradiction in Naturals, or deformity in Morals; Or laſtly, whether we contemplate the vaſt fetches and circuits of Providence, which though to the low and contracted ſpirit ſeem to claſh and interfeer, yet to the noble and capacious ſoul are all concentrick and harmonious, and make that ſtill and ſweet Muſick in his ears which the miſtaken vulgar, thought *Pythagoras* heard from the motion of the Sphears, whereas it was nothing in reality but that admirable and enraviſhing conſent of Providence, which God the great *Harmoſtes* orders in ſuch tunable and methodical proportions; whether, I ſay, we attend to any of theſe things, the contemplation of them cannot but widen and enlarge

that which is the flower and ſummity of our ſouls, I mean their Intellectual Natures, and fill them with ſuch raiſed and ſublime Notions and Idea's, that it will be almoſt impoſſible for us to miſs of finding out ſome material Truth which ſhall be worthy the Author of all things, and gratifie and reward our diligent inquiſition. Now that we may have a true and genuin conception of the Nature of God; it is altogether neceſſary that we free our minds from all prejudice and anticipation of judgment, and purge them throughout from the groſs and impure ſteams of the Corporeal life, leſt when we think we have an Idea of him, it be only an Image of our unclean fancies and imaginations: but as that *Holy One* is altogether Spiritual and immaterial, ſo muſt our apprehenſions of him be ſpiritualiz'd and removed as far from the vile commerce with matter as poſſibly we can, that our eyes being freed from the duſt and ſoil of the earth we may behold him as he is, that is, as a Being abſolutely perfect. For he that thus judges of that ever-bleſſed Being, not only removes from him all imbecility and imperfection; but inveſts him in the moſt infinite manner with whatever the mind of Man doth rationally repute to be an excellency and perfection.

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And whatever the prophane Atheiſt may object, who under pretence of honoring God with the title of Incomprehenſible, removes him ſo far, that he profeſſes, he can have no certain conception of him at all, and therefore concludes that he is not, and perverſely laughs all incorporeal ſubſtances out of the World, as if there were a contradiction in the very terms; yet he that will diſcard the perplext dictates of Fancy and Imagination, and keep cloſe to the ſure Deductions of free and ſolid Reaſon, will (I doubt not) ingenuouſly confeſs, that the Idea of God is as eaſie and natural, as of any thing elſe in the World. But it is no wonder if he whoſe mind is perpetually enveloped with a cloud of vice and ſin, cannot behold the Eternal Exiſtence of that glorious Being which we call God: or acknowledging of him yet deciphers him to the World by ſuch ſtrange Characters, as no reaſonable man can believe to be a true copy of his Nature. It is an indubitable Truth, that γνῶσις ἐκάστων δ' ὁμοιότητι γίνεται, *Every thing is beſt known by that which is moſt analogical to it*; and as the eye cannot behold the Sun ἡλιοειδὴς μὴ γενόμενον, unleſs it have ſome picture and reſemblance of the Sun drawn in it; no more can any Man have a true no-

tion of the Deity θεοειδὴς μὴ γινόμενον, unleſs he be made God-like and partake of his image and ſimilitude. There is a certain congruity and harmony between Truth and the Soul of Man; and however that ancient league by our unhappy lapſe came to be violated and broken: yet ſtill there are ſome ſtrokes and impreſſes in our minds, which claim a cognation and affinity where-ever they meet with it. And thoſe few ſparks which yet remain after the extinction of that great fire of Divine life, whoſe harmleſs and innoxious flame burnt bright within us, and by it we ſaw our ſelves, and beheld the Natures and proprieties of things, till we ſuffocated and choaked it by caſting an heap of duſt and rubbiſh upon it; theſe, I ſay, though faint and glimmering, yet retain their alliance with heaven, and God owns them as the projections and rayes of his own good life, and whoever ſincerely follows their conduct, ſhall be led to the knowledg of their inexhauſted ſource and origine. Having therefore ſuch a determinate notion of God before us, we ſhall deſcend to ſome particular Deductions from the conſideration of his Nature. As

1. *That*

1. *That there is ſomething Soveraign in the Deity, which is the root and ſpring of all his other perfections, and that this is Abſolutely full Goodneſs.*

That the Attributes of God are arbitrarious, and like looſe-hanging adjuncts to be put off and on at pleaſure, I think there is no man who knows what he ſayes, ſo blaſphemous as to affirm, but God is what he is by the neceſſity of his Nature; for he cannot be God, except he be immutable in all his eſſential proprieties: which immutability of his is ſuch, that he can neither ceaſe to be, nor act any otherwiſe then may be conſonant to the fundamental laws of his own Being. Wherefore God being the higheſt and moſt incomprehenſible life and activity, cannot fail through the Eſſential fecundity and plenitude of his bleſſed Nature of communicating himſelf to all poſſible and capable ſubjects; for the more perfect and compleat any life is, the more diffuſive it is of it ſelf; and the reaſon why Creation is not competible to any Being below the Deity, ariſes not from any poſitive will of God to the contrary, but from the impotency and imperfection of it's Eſſence. But God being no ſteril and bar-

ren principle, but every way full and abſolute, is not only carried forth to the production of things, but to the order and management of them in ſuch a way as may moſt correſpond and ſuit with their intrinſical natures. Whether therefore theſe operations of God *ad extra* (as the Schoolmen phraſe it) be guided and ſteered by an explicite and arbitrary Will, or whether they have not ſome other primary foundation, from which it is impoſſible they ſhould at any time ſwerve, and in which they are all terminated, comes now to be demonſtrated. For to ſay, that they are all bounded in the Divine Eſſence, and ſwallowed up in that immenſe Abyſs, introduces ſuch a confuſion in the Divine Attributes that our minds can have no particular or diſtinct apprehenſion of this or the other mode, and beſide gives no ſatisfaction to a rational inquirer, who would be apt to queſtion, Whether there were not a ſubordination in the Divine *Idiomata*? and, Whether they be all equally active and operative? and laſtly, Whether the Holy Scriptures do not univerſally magnifie and extol ſome one Attribute above the reſt? For the Solution of theſe Difficulties we muſt examine our own faculties, and conſider what we mean by that Idea and repreſentation we have

of

of the Divine Nature; and, what it is that principally conferrs to the formation of that notion and conception we entertain in our minds of God. That there is in us naturally an *Idea* of a Being abſolutely perfect, which we neither derived from ſenſe, nor framed by the power of Fancy and Imagination, but is indelibly wrought and engraven in our ſouls by a Divine principle, and of the ſenſe of which we can never totally rid our minds, however impiouſly diligent we may be in debauching our Spirits, and Sacrilegiouſly racing the venerable Name of the Deity out of his Temple, I ſhall take for granted: But there are ſome perfections which do more ſignally appear in the Deity, and which peculiarly conſtitute the Nature of a God; ſuch as abſolute and compleat Goodneſs, which being ſo boundleſsly diffuſive and communicative of it ſelf, is neceſſarily attended with an infinite Wiſdom to govern and direct, and Power to execute and bring into being, whatever this fertile wombe of Love ſhall travail withall. Theſe are the conſtitutive Principles of a Deity, and all other proprieties are but thoſe three grand Attributes ſeverally varied and modified. Now that they are not all of equal worth and excellency, will appear, if we look upon them as ſo many

diſtinct

diſtinct qualities in created Beings, wherein there appears ſuch pain diſſimilitude, that a man can ſcarce withhold himſelf from concluding, that they will likewiſe retain their differences when exalted into the Nature of God himſelf. Goodneſs is of an univerſal latitude and extent, and all other excellencies and perfections of humane Nature are indiſcriminately complicated in it. For a good man is not only excited by the innate generoſity and goodneſs of his mind to do that which is beſt, but ſummons his Wiſdom and Knowledg to project and contrive, and then uſes his uttmoſt Power to bring it into act. Goodneſs is the rule and meaſure of his actions, and Wiſdom and Power receive their worth and excellency from the degree of Goodneſs they partake of. Knowledg and Power are more particular and ſtrait, and more in a lower ſphear, and our actions receive no moral denomination from them, but as they participate more or leſs of Goodneſs. For a clearer illuſtration of the preſent *Theme*, we will ſuppoſe Power to have actual Exiſtence, and carryed out to the effecting of whatever lies within it's ſphear and comprehenſion, and being infinite and unlimited, to be utterly incapable of any hindrance or impediment in it's operations,

operations, and it will amount to no more than a furious and Gygantick ſelf-will, wholly indeterminate to good or evil, and as indifferent to deſtroy and remand back again into *non-entity* what it hath made, (if we can without a contradiction attribute to it the Power of Creation) as at firſt to make it, whoſe blind and impetuous ſelf-will, is the ſole rule of all it's exorbitant actions, which being no knowing principle they may oft prove as ridiculous as the vain attempt of thoſe mighty Gyants to ſcale heaven by throwing mountain upon mountain. We ſee then, that Power alone though we imagine it to have actual Exiſtence, ſpeaks no more perfection than that great and mighty wind which rent the Mountains, and brake in pieces the Rocks, when God paſſed by before the Prophet *Elijah*: And as the Lord was not in the wind, ſo neither is he to be found in ſuch boiſterous effects whoſe productive cauſe is meer ſelfiſhneſs and inconſiderate Will. God works not after any ſuch unaccountable impulſes, nor are we to look for meer Will and Power in the Creation of things: but for Wiſdom and Counſel deriving from immenſe benignity and love, which never acts but for worthy and decorous ends, and for the behoof of things them-

themſelves. This being therefore the Nature of Power conſidered in it's diſtinct capacity, let us add to it the principles of Wiſdom, and then it will ſuggeſt to us the *Idea* of the *Manichean* God, whom they make the Author of all the evill in the World; For Wiſdom and Power diſjoyn'd from the bleſſed fountain of Goodneſs, is nothing elſe but armed wickedneſs. There is no Being can communicate any thing to another which it ſelf is not inveſted withal; and if we ſuppoſe the Exiſtence of a Being of infinite Subtlety and Power, it is impoſſible it ſhould be the Author of any Good in the World, becauſe it is poſſeſt of nothing but an unlimited deſire of doing miſchief; and for this reaſon alone, Wiſdom and Power are no further good, or ſpeak perfection then they are in conjunction with Abſolute Goodneſs: and conſequently muſt depend upon it as the beams of light diſperſt through the air upon the Sun, or faculties and actions upon the principles from whence they flow. That Wiſdom which is devoid of Goodneſs, is nothing but a higher degree of craft, ſomething of the Nature of that cunning and wilyneſs we may diſcover in voracious Beaſts and Birds when they deceive and prey upon the more innocent

and

and harmleſs ſort of Animals; ſo that we plainly perceive, that Wiſdom and Power ſeparated from Goodneſs, offer no notion of perfection at all to our minds; and therefore there is ſomething in the Deity more amiable and lovely, and which as it ſpeaks perfection it ſelf, and is the moſt deſirable and excellent thing upon earth, ſo it is the ſpring of all other Attributes in the Deity, which are no further morally good, than they are united with this prime and noble quality. Hence *Tully* introducing *C. Cotta* diſputing againſt *Velleius* the Epicurean, tels him, that *Epicurus* by taking away Love from the Deity, *Tollit id, quod maximè proprium eſt optimæ, præſtantiſſimæque naturæ. Nihil enim melius aut præſtantius bonitate & beneficentiâ.* Let us now reflect upon that Archetypal Image according to which man was made, and if we do not wilfully b'ind our eyes, we cannot but ſee that it was neither Wiſdom nor Power (though we partake in ſome meaſure of both) but Goodneſs and Love, whoſe glorious forms and Idea's are diſſeminated through the intellectual World, and impreſſed upon every rational Being: The Angels themſelves, who far exceed us in Power and Wiſdom, yet ſhould they exerciſe them without the ballaſt

Lib. 1. de Nat. Deorum. Seneca Epiſt. 95. *Primus eſt Deorum cultus, Deos credere: deinde reddere illis Majeſtatem ſuam, reddere bonitatem ſine qua nulla Majeſtas eſt.*

ballaſt of Goodneſs would prove more exorbitant and ungovernable then the Apoſtate Devils. For wherein conſiſts the height of that degeneracy and revolt of Men and Angels from God; but only in this that they are departed from the eternal laws and rules of Goodneſs, and ſtrive to ſuſtain and prop up themſelves by their unlimited ſelf-will? and hence it comes to paſs, that having no ſure and ſteady foundation to bottom themſelves upon, they fluctuate and are toſſed to and fro by every unruly paſſion and deſire. Πᾶν τὸ ἀγαθὸν εὐλύτον καὶ ὁμαλόν, all good is governable and uniform; and it is immutable Goodneſs above that (to ſpeak with reverence) makes the Divinity a Uniform Being: for Wiſdom and Power are in themſelves ſo arbitrarious, multiform and uncertain, that without the poize of Goodneſs, they cannot ſettle and radicate themſelves upon any permanent Centre. This great Truth the ever-bleſſed Son of God verified, when he left the glory and beatitude of Heaven, and pitched his Tabernacle amongſt men. For wherein conſiſted the flower and excellency of his Divine Perfections? Was it not in that Univerſal Love and Benignity he expreſſed to the whole World? and in that tenderneſs and com-

compaſſion he ſhewed by going about doing good, and caſting an healing influence upon the bodies and ſouls of Men? This ſurely was the brighteſt ray of Divinity that ever ſhone from God manifeſted in the fleſh; and to this, every holy mans experience bears witneſs, who then finds himſelf moſt peaceable and calm, and moſt conformable to the Divine Image and Pourtraicture, when he is doing the moſt good, and his love moſt enlarged and comprehenſive; which Love never aſcends more acceptably to Heaven, than when it overflowes all capable ſubjects here below, and ſtrives to unite and draw them up to God their great Source and Parent. Wherefore by what hath been ſaid for the explication of this Propoſition, it ſufficiently appears, that Goodneſs is the inmoſt Centre of the Deity, and Wiſdom and Power ray forth from thence like the beams of light from their lucid Centre, ὅσον ἴδιον δείξαι.

2. *That that which is moſt pretious and beſt (as I may ſo ſpeak) in the Divine Nature, will be ſure to work firſt, and extend it ſelf to all the capacities and poſſibilities of things.*

We

We have already proved, That the Deity is no Arbitrary Being, but that all his Actions and Determinations relating to us, have their Original in Infinitely full Goodneſs; which being the moſt precious thing in the Nature of God, and the meaſure and rule of all his other Attributes and Perfections, it cannot but ſeem moſt eaſie and natural to conceive, that this Soveraign property, as it is the beſt, ſo it ſhould likewiſe obtain the firſt place in working. For infinite Power never acting but in ſubordination to directive Wiſdom; nor Wiſdom and Power exerting themſelves but in the way of, and according to the laws of Goodneſs, which being in it's own Nature ſo fruitful and communicative, that all other Modes and Attributes are tinctured with it, and lie in a laxe and diffuſe manner within the ſphear and comprehenſion of it's Energy, it muſt alſo obtain the firſt place of acting as of right belonging to it. And if we look out and take a view of the ſeveral rancks and orders of intellectual Beings, we ſhall find in every of them ſomething of greateſt value and excellency, which as it exceeds in worth all other perfections of their Natures, ſo it will be moſt energetical and of the largeſt extent

tent in acting; and contrarily, that what is of leſs excellency, is more contracted and circumſcribed, and of leſs efficacy and virtue. The ſoul of man, though one entire Orbe in the whole latitude and comprehenſion of her Eſſence; yet is made up of diſtinct powers and faculties, which are not all of equal value and excellency, nor do they all operate in the ſame order and manner. The loweſt power which we take notice of in humane ſouls, is that *Plaſtick* or *Formative* virtue wherein conſiſts the Vital Union between ſoul and body, and whoſe peculiar office it is to conſerve the motions and keep in play all the Engines of the whole corporeal Machine: and this being ſo ſtupid, languid and inert, is perpetually transfixt by the inevitable motions and variegations of matter, and fatally bound up to thoſe operations which are common to us with brute Animals. But as we aſcend higher, the Powers of the ſoul are more explicate and large, and according to their worth and excellency, obtain a more or leſs ample ſphear of Energy and Life: Thus they gradually ariſe till they come to that which is the Quinteſſence and choiceſt perfection of humane ſouls. *Reaſon* or *Intellect*, which being ſanctified by the Divine Life, bloſſomes

aud rayes forth on every ſide to the circumference of it's Eſſence, and hallows all the *Corporeal* and *Animal* powers πορρῶ ἐπαφῇ, as the *Platoniſt* ſpeaks, with an Intellectual touch and Divine emanation that in a ſenſe pervades the very loweſt of them: For as Intellect becomes more refined and ſublime, and the *Divine light* by it's ſilver cords takes greater hold upon it, ſo the exorbitancy of the lower powers decreaſes, and they are made more caſtigate and obedient to the dictates of the Superior Faculties. When therefore Reaſon is perfectly releaſed from the burden and encumbrance of this ſluggiſh and earthly body, and freed from the noxious fumes aſcending from that cadaverous Dungeon, and ſhines in it's own native and irreprehenſible beauty, it cannot be doubted but that as it is the moſt pretious part, the eye and glory of the ſoul, ſo it will have a full and abſolute Soveraignty and command, and be the firſt mover and productive cauſe of all thoſe operations it ſelf is conſcious of. And though now we have almoſt loſt the genuine ſenſe and reliſh of Truth and Righteouſneſs, and Intereſt or Paſſion and the ſatisfaction of a baſer appetite, dethron our *deſpotick* and Lordly powers, and uſurpe the Government of our minds; yet

yet who ſo manfully reſiſts this tyrannical Dominion, and ſtrives to reinſtate himſelf in his former liberty ſhall find that thoſe moral Idea's of Goodneſs, Beauty, Truth, and Righteouſneſs do more frequently, conſtantly and evenly diſplay themſelves than any other whatever; and theſe being likewiſe more excellent then the Univerſal notions of any other Science or Knowledge, they are alſo impreſſed deeper and more indelibly ſealed upon our minds and ſpirits.

But here I find it will be objected; *That although according to this way of ratiocination, Goodneſs ſeems to be the higheſt perfection of the Moral Eſſence of God, and conſequently to have the firſt place in operation; yet God being Eſſentially all theſe perfections, that is, Infinite Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power, he might impreſs upon us what notion and Idea's he pleaſed; and though he have ſo ſignally engraved that univerſal Idea of Goodneſs upon us, yet notwithſtanding he himſelf is free from all Law and Rule of acting, being in himſelf an Infinite Will and Authority, and hath beſtowed on us thoſe perfections we find in our ſelves by his own arbitrary pleaſure, and therefore we cannot give any ſatisfactory account of his Nature by what we find in our ſelves.*

In anſwer to this, I affirm,

1. That thoſe Univerſal Characters or Notions wrought into the Eſſential compoſition of our Natures, and which render us Intellectual Creatures, are a ſufficient guide to lead us to the true and certain knowledge of the Nature of God. For thoſe common and rudimental principles of Knowledge being placed in us by ſomething farr more excellent than our ſelves, and not then firſt begotten when ſome apt and fit inſtances and occaſions from without lead us to particular conſiderations and applications of them to this or that ſingular Mode or Being; and ſince we our ſelves cannot without a manifeſt repugnance to our Natural Powers and Faculties, contradict and oppoſe any of thoſe general *Sentiments*, it muſt needs follow, that we muſt ſurvey all things falling under our cogniſance by thoſe eaſie and natural rules and meaſures; and if now we remind our ſelves, that the Notion of a God, that is, of a Being infinitely perfect, is one of thoſe indelible Characters impreſſed upon our minds, and that we can no otherwiſe ſignifie our conception of ſo illuſtrious an object, than by removing whatever ſpeaks an imbecillity and imperfection, and adorning it with all thoſe glorious attributes which in the nature

ture of the thing it ſelf and in the judgment of all rational men, deſign the higheſt accompliſhment and perfection; it will unavoidably follow, that either we in this our ſtate of weakneſs and degeneracy, can never attain to any ſetled and firm notion of the Deity (which I look upon as a wide inlet to Atheiſm and Irreligion) or we muſt neceſſarily frame his Idea according to thoſe immutable notices and Images of perfection, we find in the ſurvey of the innate Treaſure and intellectual Furniture of our minds. Now what is there the mind of man can poſſibly excogitate more expreſſive of a Being of infinite Perfection, than *Infinite Goodneſs*, *Wiſdom* and *Power?* which Perfections appearing not to us of equal worth and excellency, we are led by the plain laws and dictates of reaſon to aſcribe to that the firſt place of working, which includes the higheſt and largeſt Energy and Virtue. God therefore acting according to the eſſential meaſures of an Univerſal and Almighty Goodneſs, cannot be looked upon as ſuch an Arbitrary Being as the Objection preſuppoſes: Beſide, that it is highly improbable in the nature of the thing it ſelf, that there is any ſuch thing as infinite *Will* and *Authority*, that is, as I underſtand it, ſuch a Being whoſe opera-

tions are ſteered and conducted by no other principle but *Will* and *Power*, it is certain that we judging of things according to thoſe innate Notions we have of them, cannot frame any ſuch conception of the Deity; for although it be true, that God might have placed other Idea's in us (and had his Nature been as Arbitrary as ſome conceit, no queſtion but he would have done ſo) yet it being likewiſe evident, that he hath not ſtamped any ſuch Characteriſtical Notes of his *Eſſence* upon us, it is impoſſible we ſhould entertain any other Notion of him then what plainly and apparently ariſes from that natural Idea of himſelf he hath ſigned upon every individual perſon of Mankind. Thus although we ſhould affirm, that God might ſo have ordered things at the firſt Creation of Men, and ſo attempered and diſpoſed our Faculties in reference to the objects both of the Corporeal and Intellectual World, that our Idea's of them ſhould be quite contrary to what we now find and feel in our ſelves, *e.g.* That the Idea of Matter ſhould agree to Spirit, and that of Spirit to Matter; yet they being *de facto* otherwiſe, we can aſſign no other difference then what is now in the things themſelves.

2. It is altogether inconſiſtent with the Eternal and immutable *Veracity* of God to inveſt our ſouls with ſuch Notions and Apprehenſions as were not truly ſignificative and expreſſive of his Nature. For this *Eternal Mind* intending the good and happineſs of all created Beings, endued them with Powers and Faculties agreable to their reſpective Idea's, and ſo contrived all things by an unerring Wiſdom, that nothing ſhould want it's part of that pleaſure and happineſs for which it was at firſt made. Wherefore the nobleſt ſatisfaction and felicity of humane ſouls lying in the exerciſe of their intellectual powers, and the delight accruing thence, being more or leſs intenſe, according to the nature of the object they converſed with; as it could not ſtand with the Goodneſs of God to deprive them of any innocent gratification of their minds in the contemplation of the outward World: ſo neither could it fairly accord with his *Veracity*, to prepoſſeſs them with ſuch conceptions of things as are no where to be found in the natures of the things themſelves. Since then we can no way doubt but that the bleſſed Author of our Beings is infinitely *Veracious*, this moſt pretious *Attribute* of his, will be ſufficient ſecurity to us that we are not made

perpetually and inevitably fallible: but that there is a due proportion and harmony between our faculties and thoſe objects whereof we have a cleer and diſtinct apprehenſion. And there is no reaſon or plauſible pretence we ſhould think otherwiſe; for all Error ariſing from impotency and weakneſs, and in us, is nothing but the ſickneſs of our minds, it is wholly repugnant to the moſt perfect Being, ſo to work a deceit in the intimate frame of our Natures, that we ſhould alwayes be deluded in what we imagine we have the cleareſt evidence of. Wherefore we being aſſured of the Truth of our Faculties from the *Veracity* of God, we have a ſure guide to lead us in the contemplation of his Nature and Perfections, and may give a rational account of them from what we find in our ſelves.

From theſe foregoing Conſiderations, we may by an eaſie and natural deduction inferr, that God never deſtinated any of mankind to Deſtruction; but that all the calamity and miſery they undergo, either in this World or the next, is the proper iſſue and product of their wilful Apoſtacy and defection from him. For God being *Infinite Love*, and this *Love* the moſt pretious *Attribute* of the τὸ θεῖον, and the cauſe of

of all things elſe, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that whatever deſigns or projections were intended in reference to mankind, they muſt ſpring and derive from Goodneſs, which as it is Beſt, ſo it cannot but act that which is Beſt, and moſt behoofeful to the things for which it acts. I confeſs, though this way of Argumentation from the Nature and Attributes of God, appear to me as convictive as any Mathematical Demonſtration, and I feel a more irreſiſtible and captivating force in it, than in any other way of arguing whatever; yet becauſe there is required a peculiar *Craſis* of ſoul to be convinced by it, I do not wonder that ſo many look upon it as weak and invalid. For my own part I fully believe that ſhould God by his *Abſolute Will* and *Pleaſure* place any ſuch conceptions of himſelf within my mind, as that he hates the greateſt part of Mankind for no other reaſon but becauſe *he Will*, it is impoſſible I ſhould ever credit thoſe ſtranger gueſts to be ſent from him whoſe Name is *Love*, and glories moſt of all in that fair and noble title; for thoſe apprehenſions having no affinity or alliance with the ancient and firſt inſcriptions of heaven upon my ſoul, would grow there but as ſtrange Plants in a forced and unnatural ſoil, being

ing deſtitute of that proper and radicating moiſture which ſhould diſpread them in a flouriſhing and kindly growth. There are ſome indeed who by reaſon of the penury and ſtraitneſs of this *Noble* and *Heroick* qualification of Univerſal Goodneſs and Love within their own breaſts, and confining themſelves to particular *Intereſts* and *Engagements*, ſhape the *Idea* of God as ſuitable to and reſembling their contracted Spirits as they can, and therefore attribute *Love* to him only *ſecundum effectum*, not *affectum*; whereby they would make us believe, that there is no ſuch real propriety or affection as *Love* exiſting and living in the Deity, but only a bare indication of it by certain effects, which becauſe our ſhort and ſteril underſtandings know not how to expreſs otherwiſe, we give them the denomination of *Love* or *Goodneſs*. Now although the Deity be not ſubject to thoſe variable paſſions which in our ſelves we ſtyle *Love* and *Hatred*, and which are ſeldom grounded but upon Humour and Fancy; yet to deny that there is any ſuch thing really and formally in God as *Love* and *Goodneſs*, ſuch a principle as carries him out to the production of all poſſible Beings, and whereby he takes an Eternal Complacency and Delight in whatever acts regularly

larly within it's ſphear, is in it ſelf but a groundleſs fancy: For that beloved Diſciple of the bleſſed Jeſus St. *John*, who leaned on a breaſt never void of Love and Pity to the Sons of Men, and had a very potent and vigorous ſenſe of this Divine paſſion within him, when he would ſet out and expreſs the Nature of God to us in the moſt ſignificant and yet Evangelical and attractive manner, tels us, that *he is Love*, which doubtleſs denotes ſomething real and certain, not a bare notion or airy *Idea* and fantaſtick dream known only by ſome effects, being ſomething only κατ' ἕξιν not καθ' ἀλήθειαν.

3. Concluſion.

That the Divine eſtimate of things and perſons, is according to the truth and reality of their reſpective Natures; and that when God makes judgment of Intellectual Creatures he does it by viewing their moral frame and conſtitution, and accordingly ſtands more or leſs affected towards them.

We fond Mortals being prone to Love and Hate at our pleaſure, beholding things through the vitiated and corrupt *Medium* of our luſts and paſſions, are very apt to make to our ſelves falſe repreſentations of them by

by dreſſing them up in the filthy ſhape of our own diſtorted fancies; like *Icterical* perſons who imagine all the approximate objects of ſight tinctured with yellow, when as the colour is all the while in their own eyes, and made only by the motion or ſtriking of certain vapours upon the Optick Nerves: thus many contaminating and defiling their reaſons by a familiar converſe with ſin and wickedneſs, and letting their own Self-will in the Throne, and tranſacting the whole buſineſs of their Religion upon the ſtage of Fancy, never looking higher then to the gratification and ſatisfaction of the Animal powers, and by that means making Vice connatural to them, and loſing the true diſtinction between Good and Evil, *Calling Good, Evil, and Evil, Good; putting Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs; Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter*; they frame an Image of the Deity by an *Idolum* of their own, and think that God hath the ſame good apprehenſions of their perſons and the ſame conceptions of all things elſe as they themſelves have. But that immutable Goodneſs which gave being to the Heavens and the Earth, and every thing contained in them, and is not ſubject to humours and partialities, but pervades the Eſſences

Eſſences of all created Beings, and feels all the intrigues and myſteries of each of them by a ſtable and Omnipreſent Knowledge, judges of them according to their preſent ſtate and capacities. As ſuppoſe this man righteous and holy at preſent, ſhould afterward apoſtate from that perfect ſtate, albeit his future lapſe be an object of the Divine Knowledg; yet is he not denominated from that, but from the exigency and import of his preſent condition, and from hence is approved of God, and under the decree of life and happineſs: but when he actually prevaricates and commits iniquity, he fals under the decree of death and damnation, notwithſtanding all his former righteouſneſs. There are ſome things which are of an immutable and indiſpenſable neceſſity, and are eternally unalterable even by God himſelf; ſuch are the notions of God and Evil, Juſtice and Injuſtice, and all Moral Rectitude and Deformity; and according to the importance of theſe, ſo is Gods Eſtimate of all rational Agents, without reſpect to any external qualifications or natural endowments. And whereever he finds the leaſt meaſure of his own good life ſpringing up, he is ſo far from deſtroying it, that he upholds and nouriſhes it by the vital ſtreams of his Immenſe

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Plenitude, and quickens and cauſes it to diſtend it ſelf through the powers of the ſoul by a gentle and divine heat; and knowing it to be his own genuine off-ſpring by thoſe Sacred Hieroglyphicks and impreſſions it bears upon it, he can never forſake or caſt it of as a contemptible and worthleſs thing: but embrace it as that which hath the trueſt and moſt undoubted right to the Government of the whole World, and take the greateſt pleaſure in diſpreading it throughout all the lapſed Creation, as being nothing but his own blameleſs Nature diſplayed and taking hold of ſo many ſeveral ſubjects to unite them to it ſelf, as to the moſt abſolute and ſelf-originated Good. And this is no more then what the ſacred Writ gives it's ſuffrage for; *God is no reſpecter of perſons: but in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of him.* Act. 10. 34, 35.

As our growth and increaſe is in the Life and Nature of God, ſo do we proportionably come under his favour and acceptance. For we muſt not think that ſo ſoon as ever this Potent and Divine principle begins to ſet us free from that heavy ſlavery and captivity we were detained under by our Tyrannous ſelf-wils; that we are immediately ſo far advanced into the Divine

Divine Favour, as will admit us into the ſacred *Adytum* or Holy of Holies in the higheſt Heavens, to ſee and enjoy the glory and preſence of the Divine *Schechinah*, and recreate and refreſh our ſelves with that adorable ſplendor: but we are to reckon our ſelves ſo far under the benign aſpect of heaven, as the Holy Life of God rules and bears ſway within the Empire of our minds. Heaven is not taken with the Grandeur and Blandiſhments of the world; nor is a man ſo accounted in the ballance of the Divine judgment and approbation, as he is valued in the fallacious eſtimate of frail mortals (for God ſees not as we ſee, nor are his thoughts as our thoughts) but ſuch is the man as is the inward frame and temper of his ſpirit, unbared from that ſwelling pride and oſtentation, and the painted gloſs and varniſh of Hypocriſie which ſet him off in the eyes of men. There is nothing God takes greater joy and contentment in, than the expanſion and dilatation of his own Nature and Attributes; and he never ſuffers his bleſſed Life ſolitarily to conteſt with the Rebellious and Gygantick luſts in mens ſouls, and then to be vanquiſht and die in the midſt of enemies for want of his powerful aſſiſtance: but perpetually aides and ſuccours it, making

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it victorious to the caſting down Principalities and Powers, and everting and conquering the whole Kingdom of Darkneſs, and every thing that oppoſes it's Crown and Dignity, leading the ſoul as a glorious ſpoil taken out of the hands of the airy Apoſtate Legions (who are but Uſurpers and Intruders upon the Rights and Proprieties of the Kingdom of light) into it's native Country, that πεδιον ἀληθειας, the land of Truth and Righteouſneſs. All ſin and unrighteouſneſs is directly contrary and oppoſite to the eternal Rectitude of Gods bleſſed Nature; and being ſo, it is impoſſible he ſhould ever be reconciled to it, or caſt a favourable aſpect upon it. He will ever be chaſing, purſuing, and beating it out of the World, and never ſuffer it to reſt any where in peace, but will alwayes lay ſiege againſt it, and will at length prevail and ſettle his own life upon it's rightful Throne, and put all the Powers of Hell and Darkneſs under his feet. Theſe are the two mighty Empires which have been ever ſince the revolt of Men and Angels from God, and are ſtill contending for the Government of the World, and induſtriouſly promoting the amplitude and enlargement of their reſpective Dominions, and to one of theſe every man aſſociates

ciates and adjoynes himſelf in this life, either by a manly courage and reſolution in the wayes and practice of virtue, or a puſillanimous declenſion to iniquity and vice. And therefore the Philoſopher ſpake well and agreeable to the ſenſe of Chriſtianity, καθ' ὅσον ἡ τῶν παθῶν ἐξαιρέσεως ἀμελεῖμεν ἡ ψυχῆς, τῷ πονηρῷ δυνάμει συναπτόμεθα· i. e. *The more we neglect the extirpation of our paſſions and exorbitances, the ſtronger hold has the unrighteous nature upon us, and the nearer are we conjoyned with it.* Porphyr. de ἀποχ. l. 2.

The ſum of all is this; God looking upon and judging men according to their moral habitudes and capacities, and beholding them all upright and perfect as the workmanſhip of his own hands before our great *Protoplaſt Adam* tranſgreſſed in Paradiſe, could not but intend graciouſly to them and treat them according to the innocent purity of their Natures, and therefore never conceived any ſuch diſmal purpoſe of damnation againſt them, becauſe they were not then in the nature and reaſon of the thing, objects of his hatred and diſpleaſure; nor could they become obnoxious to puniſhment, till they had actually violated ſome Law and Command.

4. Concluſion.

That all the reſults, operations and deſigns of the Deity, relating to and terminated upon ſomething without him, are the emanations and effects of Abſolute and Compleat Goodneſs.

It was not any benefit or addition to his ſtable glory and felicity, which Men or Angels might contribute, that firſt moved and incited the great Creator of the Univerſe, to bring all things into Being: but it was to communicate his Nature, and diſplay his Goodneſs in the production of all things capable of exiſting. The whole frame of Nature depends upon him, and he upholds it in the circle of his benigne Armes; and his exuberant Love, like an eternal ſpring, is perpetually ſending abroad it's ſtreams, and watering all the parts of the Creation with a Divine influx. God is not like ambitious Man, who acts that he may make himſelf great, and purchaſe a few ſwelling titles by ſucking in the aiery breath of Popular Applauſe, and like proud *Haman*, contrive and deſign the ruine of every one that will not bend the knee, and adore with humble proſtrations the vainer Image of a more con-

conceited Majesty; or like those self-will'd aspiring Spirits of whom it's affirmed, ὡς ἄρα καὶ βλάπτοιεν εἰ χολωθεῖεν ἐπὶ τῷ παρορᾶσθαι καὶ μὴ τυγχάνειν τῆς νενομισμένης θεραπείας, καὶ πάλιν εὐεργετοῖεν ἂν ταῖς εὐχαῖς τε αὐτοὺς καὶ λιτανείαις, θυσίαις τε καὶ τοῖς ἀκολούθοις ἐξευμενιζομένους. *That they will do mischief if once they are incensed by neglect of their due worship and service: but will presently become beneficial if flattered and collogued by Prayers, Supplications, Sacrifices, and other accustomed Rites and Ceremonies.* He never acts out of such scant and parsimonious principles, nor is he such a mutable and peevish Being, as to be overcome with Anger and Revenge upon every slight occasion; and yet so easie, and fond, and thirsty after the praise and glory of his Creatures, as to be appeased with a few trivial performances and demure submissions: but his Holy Nature is steady and unchangeable Goodness, which exerts not it self precariously and arbitrarily, being never disjoyned from an All-comprehensive Wisdom, nor ever subject to the passions of Envy and Vain-glory, or clouded by inadvertencies and surprizals of pettish Wrath; but like the Sun beyond the *Planetary regions*, communicates his amiable life by ever serene Radiations, and uninterrupted influences. There is nothing

Porphyr. περὶ ἀποχ. ἐμψ. l. 2. Sect. 37.

in the Deity which ariseth out of Poverty or Indigency, but of infinite Plenitude and Fulness; and no creature can augment his Felicity, who is in himself a perfect Self-sufficiency and compleat Happi-
Strom. 5. ness. Wherefore *Clemens Alexandrinus* well observes out of *Plato*, That God brought not the glorious Fabrick of the World into Being χρείας ἕνεκεν, ἵνα τιμὰς πρός τε ἀνθρώπων καὶ πρὸς θεῶν ἄλλων καὶ δαιμόνων καρποῖτο, οὐδὲ πρόσοδόν τινα ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως ἀρνύμενος, out of *indigency*, or that he might receive praise and glory from Men and Angels, as a tribute to be paid him by his Creation. It is the impotency and effeminacy of mens intellectual powers which lessens and straitens their apprehensions of the Deity, that they cannot frame any other conceptions of him then they do of themselves, as if he sought for Honour and Advantage, and something without himself, which he was not as yet possessed of by bringing his Creatures upon the stage of Being. And if these uncouth Idea's chance to light upon a subtle and unhewn temper, he will easily be provoked to deny the very Existence of God in the World, whom he cannot imagine to be Almighty Love and Immense Fulness; when he plots and contrives to augment the revenues of his glory

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by thoſe ignoble and diſhonourable wayes of deſtining his Creatures to miſery, to the end he may appear potent and magnificent in their deſtruction. For as the great *Proplaſtes* of the Univerſe beginning the efformation of a plant, and meeting with ſtubborn and inobſequious matter, gives it a different ſignature and impreſſion from it's natural Idea; and inſtead of adding to it it's due proportions and lineaments, deſpoils it of it's native forme and beauty by many miſ-ſhapen botches and protuberances: In like manner theſe direful and harſh apprehenſions of the Deity, meeting with a rough and unmalleable diſpoſition, inſtead of forming any conſiſtent notion, beget in it by their contagious affriction an utter averſation and malice againſt the thing it ſelf, and exaſperate it ſo far that it bends all it's ſtrength of wit and ſubtlety, to eradicate the very Being of a God out of the World. For undoubtedly if the minds of men be too untractable to become Devotional and Religious, the next ſtep will be to take away all ſenſe and veneration of a Supreme *Numen* as being ſomething which otherwiſe would too much curbe and reſtrain them from proſecuting that liberty their corrupt and debauched Natures aſſume to themſelves.

And what is it that gives occaſion to ſuch diſmal thoughts, and renders the lovely *Idea* of God ſuch a *Mormo* and bugbear to men, that they endeavour by all poſſible wayes to extirpate it out of their minds; but only becauſe they ſee thoſe who pretend to be the great lights of the Goſpel and Religion, and inſtructors of others in the wayes of Righteouſneſs, make ſuch dreadful repreſentations of his Nature, and ſet him forth in ſo frightful a dreſs, that they think the World had better be without, then groan under the Tyranny of ſuch a blood-thirſty Deity, who like churliſh *Saturn*, deſtroyes his off-ſpring ſo ſoon as brought into Being; nay before they were any thing but Idea's in the Divine Intellect, deſigned them by an irrevocable law to moſt ſharp and uneaſie torments? This certainly is the very inward ſenſe of the Atheiſt, who finding very contradictory and unaccountable explications as well of many other grand pieces of Chriſtianity as of the Nature of God, made by many who took themſelves to be μεγάλοι τυρες in the late times, wherein true Religion dwindled away into nothing but formal performances, long and pompous Devotions, tedious and anxious Confeſſions, as well of the Articles of their Faith as Obliquities of

of their lives, and pedantick niceties, took a fair occasion to disbelieve all, and by a hellish kind of policy, contrived at once a total eversion of Christianity, by taking away the object of Religious Worship and expunging the notion of a Deity out of mens minds. What *Plutarch* somewhere speakes of a barbarous sort of people, the Atheist retorts upon those rigid masters of Theology, that it were much better to have no notion or conception of God at all ἢ θεοὺς εἶναι νομίζειν χαίροντας ἀνθρώπων σφαττομένων αἵμασι, καὶ τελειοτάτην θυσίαν καὶ ἱερουργίαν ταύτην νομίζοντας, than to think that he takes pleasure in the blood of slain men, and accounts this the most perfect and consummate Sacrifice and Devotion. But this need not have driven the *Atheist* so far as to deny the Existence of God; for had he looked into the inbred formes and characters of his own mind, and withal viewed the original draught of God in the Holy Scriptures, he might have taken a farr more true, lively, and amiable resemblance of the Deity, than that which scared him from the very thoughts of his Being. God is one who carries on no self-interest or particular design: but that which he most of all aimes at and intends shall take place upon Earth, is the propagation of his own Life

and Nature, and the general good and welfare of all the ſons of Men. Fond and unreaſonable Man indeed, when he hath gotten power into his hands, delights himſelf in making happy or miſerable at his pleaſure: but that ſteady and immutable *Goodneſs* which neither riſes nor ſets, nor admits any variation or ſhadow of turning, glories not ſo much in the diſplaying of his power and making himſelf formidable to the Creation, as in the expanſion and dilatation of his Love, as the glory and beauty of the Sun are thoſe pleaſant rayes that flow from him. Gods power is nothing but Goodneſs arming and exerting it ſelf for the bringing about ſome deſign of Love; nor can he ever Will any thing but what is every way ſuitable and correſpondent to his invariable Goodneſs, which is the meaſure of his Will. And therefore to think that God takes any complacency in the ſole exerciſe of his Soveraignty and Dominion over his Creatures, or advances his glory by exalting and caſting them down, and making them the objects of his Love or Hate, according to his arbitrary Will and Power, is all one as if a Man ſhould ſeek for a name and glory by going about and treading upon a few poor Wormes. We all talke much of the glory

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of God, but many of us have very ſhort and contracted conceptions, and too oft adopt our own fancies for genuine and natural apprehenſions of it, as if it conſiſted in the putting forth the acts of an unlimited Will and Power how and when he pleaſeth, and declaring their effluxes and emanations to be the rule of reaſon and meaſure of all Moral Actions, and the grand Law of the whole Creation, or elſe in thoſe Hymns and Hallelujahs which are offered up to him by intellectual Beings from all quarters of the Univerſe: Whereas in truth his Glory is nothing without himſelf, nor any acquiſition and purchaſe to augment his happineſs (for he being an Infinite Plenitude of all Perfection, is incapable of receiving any complement of Glory or Bleſſedneſs) but then he moſt of all elevates and raiſes his glory and luſtre, when he moſt of all communicates his Nature, and ſhines in with a full and uninterrupted light of Truth and Goodneſs upon all the intellectual Creation. He never ſeeks his Glory in reſpect of us in any other way, than by diſpreading and imparting thoſe Soveraign Attributes of Love, Mercy, Patience, Wiſdom and Juſtice. And we in the moſt proper ſenſe do then advance the Glory of God higheſt,

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and diſcover it to the World in the moſt ample and tranſcendent manner, when the life of God becomes a Vital Principle in us, carrying us beyond the reach of corporeal exſudations and defilements, which render the ſoul inept for a conformity to his bleſſed Image; and when Truth, Holineſs and Righteouſneſs in which the Divine Nature is copyed out, become not empty and inſignificant Names and ſounds of words, but actuating and quickning Principles, and we ſtudiouſly endeavour to engrave thoſe beautiful Forms in our minds and ſpirits: In a word, then do we glorifie God, when we converſe with him in the Temple of an unſpotted heart, and derive from him in whom there is no blemiſh of iniquity, ſuch an Univerſal Holineſs as lives within us, and pervades and ſanctifies all our actions: And this the Lord Chriſt who beſt knew how to glorifie God, hath intimated to us, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*

Joh. xv. 8.

I have now finiſhed this Argument from the conſideration of the Divine Nature, and have deduced ſuch genuine and legitimate Concluſions, that if rightly eſtimated and weighed, cannot but implant for the future in every unprejudic'd mind more generous and ſerene Apprehenſions of the Deity,

ty, then are offered in any *Scheme* of the *Supralapſarian* or *Sublapſarian* Doctrins; both which concurr in that which appears moſt deformed to every pure and defecate eye, *viz.* The Eternal Reprobation and Confuſion of the greateſt part of Mankind, the one upon pretence of Gods ſole Will and Pleaſure, and the other under the mantle and cover of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion, in whoſe loins the whole race of Mankind was included, when he fell and loſt his Paradiſe. Both which opinions, though never ſo fairly guilded over, do really make God put on the maſk of cruelty and rigour, that he might appear juſt in his Oeconomy and Adminiſtration of the affairs of the World: and that which is moſt barbarous and infamous in the eye of reaſon is made to ſpeak the glory of the Deity. And that God might bring about this diſmal and black deſign of Damning his Creatures, he muſt compaſs it by injurious artifices, and tyrannical contrivances; not unlike that inhumane fraud *Tiberius* uſed to *Brutus* and *Nero* the ſons of *Germanicus*, *Variâ fraude induxit ut concitarentur ad convitia, & concitati perderentur.* How deep a ſtain doth this caſt upon the lovely rayes and efflorences of the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, making him

Suet. in Vit. Tib. c. 54.

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to become the Executioner to his own offſpring, and rend that dear life in pieces, which his own hands gave Being to? And although the *Sublapſarian Dogma* be entertained of ſome, on purpoſe to mollifie that harſh decree of the *Supralapſarian Reprobation*; yet if we diveſt it of thoſe terms and artifices of words wherewith it is mantled over to appear more ſpecious to the World, we ſhall find it caſt as great a blot upon the Divine Nature as the other. For, whether is it better to ſay, That God by his Eternal Prerogative of Abſolute Dominion over all his Creatures, has adjudged the greateſt part of Mankind to inevitable miſery, for no other reaſon but upon the impulſe of his own Will, and to ſhew the glory of his Power: Or to ſay, That God for the ſin of one Man (whom he made the Repreſentative of the ſucceeding Generations of Men to the end of the World) committed ſome thouſands of years ago, and imputed only to his Poſterity, who were no more able to help it, than to hinder their being born into the World, ſhould take the advantage of his lapſe, and decree the greateſt number of Mankind to Everlaſting deſtruction. And if we impartially view this latter, it will appear no leſs precarious and abſurd than

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the former. For though it be true, that we are really and formally guilty of Original Sin; yet to ſay, that God did phyſically predetermine *Adam*'s fall: or in the mildeſt ſenſe, That he looked upon man as fallen (for the *Reprobationiſts* are not conſiſtent with themſelves) and ſo took the opportunity which he foreſaw would offer it ſelf by his lapſe to bring about his deſign of ruining the greateſt number of Mankind, is to bring Almighty God the Father of compaſſions upon the ſtage of the World, ſpeaking unto the calamitous Off-ſpring of *Adam*, like the Wolfe when he intended to devour a Lamb:

Ante hos ſex menſes, ait, maledixiſti mihi;
Reſpondit agnus: Equidem natus non eram.
Pater hercule tuus, inquit, maledixit mihi:
Atque ita correptum lacerat injuſtâ nece.

Should God take the ſouls of men being yet innocent, ſo ſoon as he ſet them upon acting in the World according to thoſe Principles and Powers he beſtowed upon them at their firſt production, and caſt them into everlaſting burnings, they would have this comfort left to them, that they ſuffered innocently, and never in the leaſt meaſure violated any of the ſacred Laws of Heaven:

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But when they ſhall hear that their Creator and Father (who upon that very account could not inflict a greater evil than the good he beſtowed on them) hath contrived their death, and drawn them into ſin, that he might with the fairer ſhew of equity, puniſh them with infinite tortures both in body and ſoul, this injuſtice muſt needs appear unſpeakably grievous. For although ſome would ſeem to excuſe this Oeconomy from all harſhneſs, iniquity and rigor by ſubſtituting the ſofter termes of Preterition or negative Reprobation; yet if they will unmask their apprehenſions and ſpeak plain ſenſe, the difference will appear only in words, not in the thing it ſelf, and is all one as if a man ſhould ſeek to alleviate the calamity of a condemned Malefactor, by telling him he ſhould not die by Common but Noble hands; For the event declares Gods intention: and the denial of his help to extricate them from miſery, is equivalent to a poſitive Reprobation. Let us conſult a little our own faculties, and reaſon the caſe; Is it at all conſentaneous to that communicative Goodneſs, wherein God takes moſt delight to glorifie himſelf, to make thoſe ſouls the deſolate Victims of enraged Vengeance, who never had any more then a capability of Exiſtence when their

their first Parent sinned against heaven, and could no more prevent their defilement by that diffusive contagion, then hinder themselves from being first made? *Arrian* makes a very near cognation and affinity of the souls of Men with God, as if they were ἀπὸς μόρια ἢ ἀποσπάσματα, particles and avulsions from him; and when *Moses* made intercession for the *Israelites* upon the Rebellion of *Korah*, he uses this Title or Appellation, *The God of the spirits of all flesh*, as the most prevalent Argument to induce him not to be wrath with the whole Congregation for one mans sin; forasmuch as he was their Creator, and therefore could not but pity the works of his own hands: And the Author to the *Hebrews* styles this everblessed Being, *The Father of Spirits*, who for that very reason, can never cast of that Relation, and become unpitiful to his own lovely Off-spring, who in their lowest state and greatest degeneracy were vouchsafed to be called τὰ τέκνα τῦ Θεῦ, *The Sons of God*. And now what other can these things signifie, but that there is a very near alliance and consanguinity between God and the souls of Men? and that it is only the corrupt imaginations of men which introduced those horrid Decrees, and represented God as a hater

Cap. 14. *lib.* 1. *in Epictet.*

Numb. xvi. 22.

Chap. xii. 9.

Joh. xi. 52.

hater of Mankind, and deſirous of the death of his Creation? But to carry on this a little further: That God ſhould hang the everlaſting intereſt of millions of ſouls upon the frail and mutable Will of a ſingle Perſon, whom he foreſaw would lapſe, and by it ruin and undo the greater part of his yet uncreated Poſterity, is an Oeconomy too harſh and rigid ever to be put in execution by the God of Love, and unworthy the Nature of him who is the Father of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and in him the Father of Mercies and Compaſſions. Let us be wiſe unto ſobriety, and act like men who care not for Words and Names, but Things: Suppoſe an hundred Perſons condemned to die, equally culpable, equally criminal; and it be in the Power of ſome Good Man to ſave ten, twenty, or all if he pleaſe, will he not rather deliver all, than only redeem twenty or a leſs number, eſpecially when he may do it with the ſame expence and coſt? and ſhall we imagine God to be leſs Good than a charitable and kind-hearted Man? Do God and his holy Angels take an infinite complacency and delight, and rejoyce at the Converſion of one ſinner, and can we think they take pleaſure in the deſtruction of Myriads, even before they ever actually offended? This made

made Mr. *Calvin* betake himſelf to the defence of the *Supralapſarian* cauſe, becauſe he knew not how the Perſonal ſin of *Adam* ſhould be derived upon his Poſterity, and make them formally guilty, ſo as God might *Salvâ bonitate & juſtitiâ*, Reprobate them as ſinners, and caſt them into the loweſt hell: Wherefore he aſcribes all to the Divine Preordination, and doubts not to ſay, *Nihil ad nos unius hominis culpa, niſi nos cæleſtis judex æterno exitio addiceret.* But let us hear him ſpeak out his mind more fully to this purpoſe, *Inſtit. lib. 3. cap. 23. §. 7. Diſertis verbis hoc extare negant, decretum fuiſſe à Deo ut ſua defectione periret Adam; Quaſi verò idem ille Deus, quem Scriptura prædicat facere quæcunque vult, ambiguo fine condideret nobiliſſimum ex ſuis Creaturis. Liberi arbitrii fuiſſe Dicunt ut fortunam ipſe ſibi fingeret: Deum verò nihil deſtinaſſe niſi ut pro merito eum tractaret.* Tam frigidum commentum *ſi recipitur, ubi erit illa* Dei Omnipotentia, *quâ ſecundum arcanum conſilium, quod alibunde non pendet, omnia moderatur? Atqui Prædeſtinatio, velint, nolint, in poſteris ſe profert.* Neque enim factum eſt naturaliter ut à ſalute exciderent omnes unius parentis culpâ. *Quid eos prohibet fateri de uno homine,* *In Reſp. ad Calumn. Nebul. ad Art. 1.*

quod inviti de toto humano genere concedunt? Quid enim tergiverſando luderent operam? Cunctos mortales in unius hominis perſonâ morti æternæ mancipatos fuiſſe Scriptura clamat. Hoc cùm naturæ aſcribi nequeat, ab admirabili Dei conſilio profectum eſſe minimè obſcurum eſt. *Bonos iſtos juſtitiæ Dei Patronos perplexos hærere in feſtu â, altas verò trabes ſuperare nimis abſurdum eſt. Iterum quæro,* Unde factum eſt ut tot gentes unà cum liberis eorum infantibus *æternæ morti involveret lapſus Adæ abſque remedio, niſi quia* Deo ita viſum eſt? *Hic obmutescere oportet alicui tam dicaces linguas.* Decretum *quidem* horrible fateor; *inficiari tamen nemo poterit quin præſciverit Deus quem exitum eſſet habiturus homo antequam ipſum conderet*; & ideo præſciverit, quia decreto ſuo ſic ordinarat. It cannot be denyed then, but that the Scripture abundantly teſtifies, and our dayly experience aſſerts the Lapſe and Apoſtacy of Men from God, and that they are really guilty of an Original contagion: but that it came by any Ordination and Decree of God, neither Scripture nor Reaſon will aſſent unto. And for this Degeneracy God might juſtly have puniſhed all the World, ſince that every man had made

made himſelf obnoxious by departing from him, and violating his Sacred Law: But God whoſe Goodneſs never fails, was ſo far from taking advantage of the deplorable ſtate of Mankind, that he had a deſign of Good towards them, and ſent the Lord Chriſt into the World, who taking upon him to become a ἱλασμα, or expiatory Sacrifice for the ſins of men, took of all that diſpleaſure which was conceived againſt them, according as the Apoſtle tells us, *God was in Chriſt reconciling the World unto himſelf:* And again, *It pleaſed the Father that in Chriſt ſhould all fulneſs dwell, and (having made peace through the bloud of his Croſs) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven.* By which Reconciliation is meant Gods taking into grace and favour lapſed Man, and forgiving their foul degeneracy from him, and aſſuring them that their paſt obliquities ſhall never ruine them, if now they will endeavour to become New-creatures, and that now he hath entred upon a Covenant of Peace, wherein he promiſes to them all the aſſiſtance that poſſibly can be given Rational Beings; ſo that now no man is damned for his Original, but Actual Tranſgreſſions: other-

2 Cor. v. 19. Col. i. 19, 20.

wiſe it cannot be underſtood how God through Chriſt ſhould reconcile the World unto himſelf, or how the Grace of God which came by Chriſt did abound, and was made more efficacious then ſin; For if the ſin of *Adam* deſtroyed and ſlew more, than the Death and Paſſion of the Lord Chriſt made alive, then were Sin of a larger extent and more potent than v. Grace; and the Apoſtle could not truly affirm, *That where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.*

CHAP.

Chap. IV.

A fourth Argument againſt the Doctrine of Inconditionate Reprobation, *taken from the Evangelical Diſpenſation; wherein is ſhown, the purport and deſign of the Goſpel, which is to reinſtate all men into the Participation of the Divine Nature, and that that Rigid Doctrine is deſtructive of ſo high and glorious an end.*

THere is no Man that knows himſelf, and diſcerns the true frame of his own Being, what ſublime and noble perfections the ſoul is capable of, and withal reflects upon the weak and imperfect ſtate of the Sons of men, how uncertain and fluctuating their judgments are at the beſt, and how frequently obſcured with prejudice, how impotently ſtubborn their wills to the election of ſubſtantial good, and how broken and diſordered the faculties of their whole man, but will

aſſuredly conclude that all Mankind (however it comes to paſs) are extremely alienated and apoſtatiz'd from that innate purity and excellent ſtate in which they were created (for no Man that believes himſelf made by an Alwiſe and infinitely perfect Author, can imagine that he came thus lame and maimed out of his hands) and ſunk as low as the capacities of their Nature will permit, being only vivacious and active to trifling, low, and bodily intereſts and concernments, carrying on ſuch poor and momentary deſigns as are unworthy the native generoſity of their minds; in a word, ſo devoid of that life in the poſſeſſion of which conſiſts their true felicity, that they are paſt hopes of recovering by their own ſolitary endeavours their priſtine and ancient glory. But although Man by that venturous and bold revolt from the bleſſed Kingdom of Light, diſpoſſeſſed himſelf of Gods favour, and forfeited all right and title to his ordinary care and Providence; yet that ever-to-be-magnified Goodneſs which made him at firſt Lapſable, beheld him as a calamitous object of compaſſion, and deſigned the erecting and reedifying that glorious Temple which ſin and unrighteouſneſs had miſerably defaced and ruined, and the repoſſeſſing his own

life

life of it's rightful Government and Dominion in the Souls of Men, which however they come into the World the ſubjects of bruitiſh luſts and paſſions, are yet capable of Angelical accompliſhments, and a Vital Union with the Creator of all things: God therefore being the higheſt and moſt perfect life, and feeling and knowing his Nature to be the moſt pretious thing in all the World, and the utmoſt perfection of every Rational Being, could not but intend graciouſly to his lapſed Creatures, and ſeek the extenſion and diſpreading of his goodly Attributes over all capable ſubjects of the World of life. For he that ſhall look upon the diligence and activity of the dark Powers in enlarging the bounds of their uſurped Kingdom, and conſider the contagious and diſſeminating Nature of every pitiful and degenerate luſt, how every crazie and ſickly vice attempts and offers at a further explication of it ſelf, and every ſmall Exarchat of that Helliſh Principality endeavours dayly to make new additions, and take in freſh ſupplies to maintain the general cauſe of unrighteouſneſs, and augment their petty Royalties, can never think that God will ſit as a diſintereſſed ſpectator; but promote and advance his own good life to the command

of the whole Creation, and brake down the power of that great *Arimanus*, who captivates the ſons of Men in the fetters and ſhackles of Mortality and Death. The life of God is a ſtrong and powerful principle, and hath alwayes the arme of Heaven to aid and aſſiſt it: but all ſin and unrighteouſneſs is a meer poverty and deficiency, not able to exiſt in the World, did not the ſelf-wills of men uphold it, and can never ſtand againſt the potent aſſaults of the Heavenly Nature. Which holy life that God might reeſtabliſh in the World, he hath delivered the Goſpel, the laſt and moſt perfect diſpenſation that ever was or ſhall be communicated to Men, which conſiſts not in an external and dead form of words, nor is it a meer ſyſteme and compendium of ſuch precepts, that like the *Moſaical* Law, ſanctifie only to the purifying of the fleſh, but cannot κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα, *Perfect him that doth the ſervice as pertaining to the Conſcience*; that is, Purge and cleanſe his mind from dead Works, and make way for the conſummation of the life of God within him, whereby he ſhall no longer be in bondage and ſervility to every caitive luſt, but act ſpontaneouſly under a free and generous principle, and become a law

to

to himſelf: but ſuch a Method of perfect Righteouſneſs and Virtue as ſhall purifie, refine and exalt the ſpirits of Men from all feculent concretions, and ſubdue every irregular motion and unruly deſire that would tempt and ſollicit their choice of corporeal joyes, and beget in them ſo true a reliſh of unblameable Goodneſs and Holineſs, as ſhould at the end of their mortal life inſtal them in the full poſſeſſion of everlaſting Tranquility and Peace. Of which glorious contrivance, though we have a *Scheme* and *Model* drawn out in the Holy Goſpels; yet there is a life and ſpirit in Chriſtianity that cannot be blotted on paper, but lives and acts in ſuch hearts as are framed and ſquared according to thoſe Rules contained in the Sacred Writings. And this he who is the Author of our Faith and Bleſſedneſs teſtified, when he ſaid, that his *Words were Spirit and Life*; ſuch as were able, and deſigned to revive the dead and ſenſleſs minds of Men, and propagate a vital heat and motion through the torpid and benummed World: and accordingly the Apoſtle St. *Paul* tels us, that Chriſtianity is indeed νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς, *The Law of the Spirit of life*: and in another place, διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος, καὶ δικαιοσύνης, *The miniſtration of the Spirit, and* Rom. viii. 2. 2 Cor. 3.

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the miniſtration of Righteouſneſs, in oppoſition to the διακονία τανάτυ καὶ κατακείσεως, *The diſpenſation of Death and Condemnation*; intimating, that under the Goſpel men ſhall not have a Mechanical and Artificial Religion, but ſuch as frames the life and ſpirit of God in their hearts, and becomes a Vital forme, tuning their ſouls into an Univerſal conſent with Gods own Will, whereby they ſend forth moſt harmonious and Divine accents, not only when they are ſtricken and beaten upon by an external hand, like *Memnon*'s ſtatue, whoſe Muſical notes ceaſed ſo ſoon as the Sunbeams were withdrawn from it; but from an internal Power, incorporated and made one with their own ſpirits. It is true, when God at firſt made Man, and ſent him into this lower World, he left him to be governed by thoſe innate preſcriptions and rules of Righteouſneſs he interwove in the conſtitution of his Nature at his firſt production; and while he followed this light, and turned not aſide to the falſe fires of his depraved will, he walked in ſafe and ſecure paths: But when Men began to multiply upon earth, Sin and Vice increaſed, and the infectious ſteams of Iniquity ſoon grew into a cloud and obſcured the light of the day, and men forſook their

their ancient Guide, and wandred about in Darkneſs and Error; and the voice of Reaſon was not heard when Self-intereſt and Paſſion became the ſole principles of action. Hence it came to paſs, that in ſucceſſion of time Mens diſcriminative faculties growing inſenſate and dull through the life and vigour of their Animal powers, and their *Criteria* abating and looſing their quick and nimble taſt and relliſh of true good and happineſs, they chooſe only the preſent ſatisfaction and pleaſure of their corrupt Appetites, and embraced blindfold every inordinate motion and paſſion; and it was too late now to curb and reſtrain their lawleſs and rampant Deſires. For although Divine Goodneſs which was never abſent nor withdrawn from the World, did in all Ages and Places raiſe up conſiderable and holy Perſons to inſtruct the perverſe Sons of Men in the wayes of Righteouſneſs; yet their Precepts and Admonitions were entertained by very few, the reſt of the World ſtill ſlumbring in their old wickedneſs and ſtupidity, and chuſing ſuch faint and glimmering flames to guide themſelves by, ſuch weak and ſickly Principles as might leaſt diſtrub their fancied Peace, and moleſt their deſired Security. Wherefore

when

when this way proved unſerviceable and unfit for Mans Reſtauration, God entred upon a new Diſpenſation, and revealed himſelf more plainly to the *Jews*, ſelecting *Jacob for his Portion, and Iſrael for the lot of his Inheritance*, conducting them by an infant Religion which ſhould make way and prepare their minds for the reception of that glorious Myſterie which in due time ſhould be communicated to the World; and delivering to them Laws, Statutes and Judgments, fencing and hedging in the impure eruptions of their debaſed Natures by *Judicial Decrees*, and beſiedging Vice and Iniquity by the actual promulgation of a Law. But the main of this Oeconomy was only *Thetical* and *Poſitive*, deriving it's obligation meerly from the Divine Command, and adapted for the moſt part to the *Plaſtick* Powers of the ſoul; for it conſiſting chiefly in external Performances which had no intrinſick Goodneſs contained in them, nor any other Reaſon of their injunction, but the will and pleaſure of the Impoſer, it could not aſcend higher then the Fancy or Imagination, nor contribute any thing to the ſublimating Reaſon and Intellect, while all it's motions were determined in ſo low a ſpear. And hence aroſe the great imperfection

ſection of the *Moſaical Law*, in that it had only an *Adumbration*, and preſented a Landtschap of *good* things, and not the *very image* and *ſubſtance*, and conſequently was altogether deſtitute of a *Vital* and *Energetical* Power to promote true and ſubſtantial Holineſs, or extirpate and mortifie the exorbitant paſſions of corporeal life. For indeed the whole body of the *Judaical* Service was only a Prefiguration of ſomething more perfect and illuſtrious to be diſcovered to the World, the moſt myſterious part of it being Typical and Emblematical, carrying an abſcondit ſignification under an External Symbol; which the Author to the Hebrews ſeems to allude to, when he ſayes it was neceſſary that the τὰ ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, *The patterns of things in the Heavens, ſhould be purified with theſe* ——— And again, *Chriſt is not entred into the holy places made with hands* ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, *The figures of the true* ——— But when notwithſtanding this careful Diſcipline men were ſtill corrupt and ſatisfied themſelves with the bare obſervance of the letter of the Law, neglecting the τὰ βαρύτερα, *the weightier and more principal matters*, ſuch as Juſtice, Righteouſneſs, Truth and Goodneſs, God grew weary of this Oeconomy, and called Heb. x. 1. Heb. ix. 23, 24.

led more for the performance of the Moral then Ceremonial part of the Law, and when the fulness of time was come resolved to bring about his last and most perfect determination, which was to send down his well-beloved Son with full Power and Authority to communicate an *Everlasting Righteousness*, and deliver to the World the Gospel, which is the sum and substance, the flower and quintessence of those πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως, exterior modes and schemes, wherewith he instructed the *Jewish* Church of old, and which retains only such Ceremonies as are necessary in regard of our frail and mortal state (in which we are more affected with the propulsions and motions of sense, then with Truths of a refined and intellectual constitution) and is compounded and made up of such things as are naturally and immutably good, such as have an eternal and indispensable obligation, being nothing but the *Idea's* of our own souls which we had buried and obscured by our fall, raised and brought to light again, the results of Gods own Nature imprinted upon our minds, and his moral Being explicated and dispread throughout our spirits. The Gospel is nothing but God manifested in the flesh, his Goodness, Wisdom, Justice,

stice, and Mercy veiled under the *Cortex* of words and expressions adapted and fitted to our mean capacities, and it's highest aime and design is to make us τῆς θείας φύσεως κοινονοὺς, *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, and perfect us according to his own Image of Righteousness and Truth, and in our due time invest us with the immortal robes of life and glory. This was the Noble end of the *Pythagorean* Philosophy, ὅλους δ' ὅλων ὑποπτέρους γενέσθαι πρὸς τὴν τῶν θείων ἀγαθῶν μετάληψιν, ἵν' ὅταν ὁ τοῦ θανάτου καιρὸς ἐυστῇ καταλιπόντες ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ θνητὸν σῶμα, καὶ τὴν τούτου φύσιν ἀποδυσάμενοι, πρὸς τὴν ἀρχαίαν πορείαν ὦσιν ἔυζωνοι ὁι τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀγώνων ἀθληταί· τότε γὰρ καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν αὐτοῖς ἀποδίδοσθαι τάσιν, καὶ θεοποιεῖσθαι, ὅσον οἷόν τε ἀνθρώποις θεοὺς γενέσθαι. And questionless a Divine and Heroick spirit moved in those Philosophers veins, and they knew and felt the irradiations of that Heavenly life, which quickens and informs every Rational Being that puts no wilful stop and impediment to it's kindly operations: But whether ever they obtained that high and excellent atchievement they aimed at, by living up to the Precepts and Principles of their Philosophy, I shall not now enquire. Sure I am, there was never any Oeconomy yet divulged to the World, which more illustriously propagated the Divine

Hierocles in Carm. Pythag.

Divine Life and Nature, or more effectually conduced to the drawing Men from Sin and Wickedness, and weakning the Diabolical Kingdom, then that Evangelical Mysterie which hath been hid from Ages and Generations; but is now made manifest to Mankind by the appearing of Jesus Christ. That we are deeply lapsed and degenerated from God, is the universal consent of all Men, although they differ in the manner of it's explication: *Plato* taught that the Fall of Man consisted ἐν πτεροῤῥυήσει, *in the defluxion of the souls pinions*; whereby not being able any longer to bear her self up in the higher Regions, she fell to the Earth, and inhabited a Mortal body, which the above named Author thus Paraphrases upon, ὥσπερ οὖν ἡ θεόθεν φυγὴ, καὶ ἡ πτεροῤῥύησις τῶν κουφιζόντων ἡμᾶς πρὸς τὰ ἄνω εἰς τὸ τῶν θνητῶν ἤνεγκε τόπον, οἷς τὰ κακὰ συνεισέρχεται; οὕτως οὖν ἡ τῆς θνητῆς προσπαθείας ἀποβολὴ; καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀρετῶν, ὧν πτερῶν τινῶν ἔκφυσις πρὸς τὸ τῶν καλῶν καθαρὸν τόπον, εἰς τὴν θείαν εὐζωΐαν ἡμᾶς ἀνάξει· that is, *As our departure from God, and the defluxe and moulting of our plumes, whereby we soared aloft, caused our descent into the region of Mortality and Wretchedness; so it is the rejection of our bodily passions, and the growth and springing of virtue as of new wings,*

wings, which will carry us to the pure habitations of Holineſs and Divine felicity. But whether our lapſe were thus or not, it makes little; however it was, this is certain, that our Reaſcent to God, muſt be in all points contrary to our Apoſtacy from him. As we have polluted our Natures by a boundleſs regard and Adheſion to corporeal pleaſures, and ſunk our ſelves deep into the material World; ſo on the other ſide, our reverſion to our loſt happineſs muſt be effected by refining our ſouls from terrene dregs, and converſing with our mind and intellect, and ſubjugating our Animal powers to the dictates and *Imperium* of Reaſon. As our deſcent came by liſtning to the impure whiſpers and titillations of the bodily life; ſo our aſcent and Reſurrection muſt come by hearkning to the ſuggeſtions of the Intellectual Man. And what more effectual and powerful means can be excogitated to recover mankind from the thraldom and bondage of ſin, then that ſacred method divulged to the World in the manifeſtation of the Goſpel, whoſe great tendency and ſcope is to enforce the neceſſity of a good and vertuous life, and mortifie all irregular and inordinate deſires, and reinthrone Divine Righteouſneſs to it's juſt rights and poſ-

ſeſſion in the hearts and minds of men? To what other purpoſe are we commanded in the Goſpel to extirpate every extravagant luſt and paſſion, and crucifie the ſpurious productions of Vice, and proſecute with all diligence and affection their lovely contraries: but becauſe the one depreſſes our minds from their true ſtate by ſubjecting them to a baſe and ignoble drudgery, and the other recovers them to their firſt and genuine freedom, and puts them into a capacity of immortality? For all paſſions, the more corporeal they are and participate of the body, the more they draw and wind the ſoul to the center of the Animal life, which by a copious emiſſion of fuliginous rayes, obnubilates the intellectual and perceptive powers, and whoever purges himſelf from theſe, *ſhall be a veſſel unto honour.* This purgation of Soul and Spirit was judged indiſpenſably neceſſary for the recuperation of the Divine Image by the *Pythagorean* Philoſophers, and is called by *Porphyry* παντὸς ἀλλοτρίου ἀφαίρεσις, *the ablation of every thing extraneous*, leaving only ſuch forms in the ſoul as are congenit with it's own Nature. It's true, as we come into the World, we reliſh little elſe but the fond gratifications of the body, and are taken up and inamour'd with the in-

eſcations

eſcations and allurements of the plaſtick life, whereby our better parts are dulled and ſtupified, and in this degenerate ſtate the ſoul is truly ſaid in the *Pythagorick* ſenſe μεταβάλλειν εἰς ἄλλα ἤθη ζώων *to paſs into brutes*, not by a μετάγνωσις ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς εἰς ἄλογα, *tranſfuſion of the humane ſoul into Beaſts*, but by it's deſcent into the brutiſh life, and aſſimilating it ſelf to ferine paſſions and inclinations; διὰ πάντων τῶν συγγενεῖαν, οἱ μὲν ἀποκλίναντες, λύκοις ὅμοιοι γινόμεθα, ἀσπίδωλοι καὶ βλαβεροί· οἱ δὲ λέουσιν, ἄγριοι καὶ θηριώδεις· οἱ πλείους δ' ἡμῶν αἰλούροις· τί γὰρ ὄζον ἄλλον λοίδορος καὶ κακοήθης ἄνθρωπος ἢ αἰλούρου; as *Arrian* expreſſes it. The great work therefore of the Goſpel is to beat down and conquer the bruiſh and irrational part in us, to eradicate our vile and depraved affections, and to place the Divine life in a full and entire command over all our inferior faculties. To the bringing about which bleſſed deſign, and to compleat and perfect a through *Purgation* of our minds, we are injoyned in the Goſpel great Temperance, Sobriety and Moderation of all terreſtrial deſires, as the moſt conducive means to ſpiritualize and attenuate our minds, whereas the

contrary drowns * them in corporeal effluxes and exsudations: And moreover we are commanded an Universal abstinence from all wrong and injustice, and a hearty love and good will to all mankind; to hold fast that which is good, and abstain from all appearance of evil; to abstract our hearts from Mundane and Temporal felicities, and make treasures for our selves in heaven, and to be no more sollicitous for terrene concernments then the Lillies of the field, or the fowls of the air; to seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and to depend upon his Fatherly Care and Providence for the necessities of our lives; to keep our selves pure and undefiled not only from outward and grosser, but internal and more refined pollutions; to be ready to do good and distribute to the necessities of our Brethren; to live peaceably if it be possible, with all men; In a word, *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever are pure, whatsoever are lovely, whatsoever are of good report; if there be any vertue, if there be any praise*

* ὁ γὰρ νοῦς τὴν αἰωνίαν ἡμῖν ζωὴν συνέχει, τὸ δὲ σῶμα πιαινόμενον, λιμώττειν τὴν ψυχὴν ποιεῖ ἀπὸ τῆς μακαρίας ζωῆς, καὶ τὸ θνητὸν αὔξει, παραιρεῖν καὶ ἐμποδίζον πρὸς τὴν ἀθάνατον βίον· μιαίνει τε ἐνσωματοῦν τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ κατασπῶν πρὸς τὸ ἀλλόβιον. Porphyr. l. 4. περὶ ἀποχ. ἐμψ.

to think on thoſe things. Theſe are the proper food and nouriſhment of our intellectual man, and bring a preſent pleaſure in the exerciſe of them, far ſurpaſſing the choiceſt entertainments of ſenſe. For what truer and nobler delight can accrew to our ſpirits, then to have done an act of Charity, to have bound up an aking head, dryed up a watry eye, and relieved a naked and hungry body? How ſordid and baſe is the narrow and contracted mind that never looks beyond it ſelf, but moves in a ſphear diſtinct from all the World beſide, as if it were ſome particular Being, and not a part and member of the Univerſe? What is there more noble and Divine than Love, which neither envies nor ſeeks it's own, but fills the mind of man with a ſolid peace and contentment? and, How broken and troubleſom is the ſtate of that man, whoſe heart is continually corroded with Envie and Malice, and cannot look upon his Neighbour without an evil eye? What ſerenity and quietneſs of life is he poſſeſſed of, who following the Precepts of the Goſpel, makes himſelf maſter of his paſſions, and never ſuffers any impure and brutiſh luſt to creep up into the bed of Reaſon and defile it: but lives in a clear exerciſe of his diſcriminative faculties, and

ſubdues all his lower powers to the obedience of his mind and Intellect? while he that renders himſelf captive to the paſſions and various motions and inclinations of ſenſe which God gave to be his ſervants, never poſſeſſes any true and real tranquillity, but carries a Tempeſt within his breaſt, which perpetually toſſes him to and fro, like thoſe diſconſolate ſpirits our Saviour mentions, *Matth.* xii. who walk through dry places, ſeeking reſt but finding none. He that ſincerely conforms himſelf to the Evangelical method of Truth and Righteouſneſs, forſakes the muddy and groſſer World, and aſcends above the clouds in Divine and peaceful Contemplations, and finds himſelf out of the reach of the ſtorms and thunders of the troubled air he hath left behind him. He apprehends God as the moſt lovely and deſirable object in the whole World, and then feels himſelf moſt at eaſe when he endeavours to unite and become one with that ever-bleſſed Being, ſubtracting his affections from all earthly vanities, as finding ſomething more noble and worthy to beſtow them upon; & thus as *Porphyry* ſpeaks of the *Egyptian* Prieſts, ἀπέδοτο ὅλον τὸν βίον τῇ πρὸς θεὸν ὁμιλίᾳ καὶ θεωρίᾳ, *He hath given up his whole life to Divine Contemplation and ſearch after*

Lib. 4. περὶ ἀποχ. ἐμψ.

after the Deity. Such Power have Evangelical Truths over the minds of men, that they transform them into their own native image and ſimilitude, and the more they are looked into, the more they enraviſh them with their heavenly beauty and pulchritude. And becauſe afflicted and perſecuted Vertue could not be thought eligible meerly for it ſelf, nor be a ſufficient argument to induce us to the love and practice of it who were ſo fatally addicted to the concerns of ſenſe; therefore God who knew our frame and how far, and to what degrees we had apoſtatiz'd from his holy Nature, did not only propound good things to our choice, but ſolicit our wills to the embracing of them by the ſtrongeſt evidences and moſt attractive motives that our Natures were capable of receiving. The life of ſenſe being more powerful and laying a greater, though not a juſter, claim to our minds as we are born into this World, God was pleaſed to deal with us after a ſenſible manner, and in a way of condeſcending Wiſdom, proportioning the Truths he delivered to us to our capacity of reception: And this was that the Apoſtle called the *Fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, wherein God ſtoops down and puts on the garb and frailties of huma-

nity, and ſuits the reſults of his will with our mean and ſhallow apprehenſions. *Great is the Myſterie of Godlineſs, God was manifeſted in the fleſh*, and cradled in the circle of a Virgins arms: which clearly demonſtrates, even to outward ſenſe, the exceeding Goodneſs and Wiſdom of Almighty God, that he hath not caſt off the care of Mankind, but is at peace with the World, and hath put on the bright robes of Lovingkindneſs and Mercy, which he hath given a large *Specimen* and full proof of in the Miſſion of the Lord Chriſt from heaven. God would have all men lay aſide their hard thoughts and cauſleſs-jealouſies and ſuſpicions of his Nature, as if he did not from his heart intend them good, but only ſuſpended his anger for a time, which might again break out upon them in prodigious floods of vengeance and fury. For this is the moſt certain ſign that God wills and deſires our happineſs and welfare, in that he hath united himſelf to our Nature, and ſent down his only begotten Son for no other purpoſe, but to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt: *And if he ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* What is there now can lay a greater tie upon ingenuous ſpirits, then

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the diſcovery of ſo much undeſerved kindneſs and love? What heart is there ſo obdurate and rocky, that this will not diſſolve into the tears of love and joy, to behold the bleſſed Jeſus hanging between heaven and earth upon the Croſs, that he might reconcile all things that are in heaven and earth, and become a propitiatory Sacrifice for all mens ſins in the World? It is ſaid of *Socrates*, that he was ſo inamour'd with this Divine paſſion of Love, that he ſtyled himſelf Θεράπων τῆς ἔρωτος, *A ſervant of Love*: Let therefore Love, which is the Proxenet of Nature, the great inſtrument of conciliating hearts, beget in thee a return and retribution of Love, and never think of thoſe ſtreams of blood which ſo copiouſly flowed from the wounded body of thy dying Lord, without a paſſive and melting ſpirit; but be likewiſe a ſervant of Love, and act under that generous principle, for *Love is of God: And every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

And that we may not think we are ſet to remove mountains, or perform impoſſibilities when we are exhorted by the Goſpel to the participation of Gods holy life, we ſhall never be left alone to ſink under our load and die; but ſhall have the aſſiſtance

ſtance of that *Almighty* and *Demiurgical* ſpirit of Love, who hovered over the dark *Chaos*, and brought into Being the goodly frame of heaven and earth, and repleniſhed all the immenſe tracts of ſpace with ſutable inhabitants. This is that *Wiſdom* which is the *brightneſs of the Everlaſting, the unſpotted mirrour of the power of God, and the Image of his Goodneſs; which remaining in her ſelf makes all things new, and in all ages entring into holy ſouls makes them friends of God and Prophets. She will not lodge in a ſinful body, nor abide when unrighteouſneſs cometh in; For ſhe is more beautiful then the Sun, and above all the order of ſtars, being compared with the light, ſhe is found before it.* This kind and loving ſpirit will God beſtow upon every one that asks it of him, to repair his broken and decayed Nature; to raiſe up the Divine Image, to joynt and confirm every perverſe diſlocation in the frame of his ſoul, and to perfect and compleat the living efformation of Chriſt within him. Let no man then deſpair of attaining to a ſtate of Bleſſedneſs under the Goſpel; for this Benign Spirit, whoſe delights are with the Sons of Men, pervades the whole World, and touches and overſhadows every man with out-ſtretched

Wiſd. ch. vii.

wings

wings, who is willing to have the Divine Image and Pourtraiture formed in him, and doth not by impurity and uncleanneſs chaſe it away. Though our enemies are mighty, and our ſouls weak; yet let none deſpair of Victory; for through the aſſiſtance and conduct of that Almighty, we ſhall be able to overcome them. He is ever cheriſhing and foſtring the life of God wherever it's born into any ſoul, and ſweetly inſinuates into our minds, and hallows and ſanctifies all our powers, and excites us to a ſerious and hearty purſuit after the indiſpenſable laws of Truth, Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs. We are not fallen and degenerated beyond the power of God, but his Spirit is able to raiſe and bring up our ſouls from the loweſt Hell, and to renew and reform our debaſed and wretched Natures. For what cannot he do, who at firſt made us faultleſs and happy, till we ruined and defaced his bleſſed Image, and rendred our ſelves the miſerable objects of his compaſſions? What is there in our frame ſo ſtubborn and inſequacious that he cannot rectifie and redreſs, who at firſt created all things, and brought into Being all the Beauty and Harmony of Heaven and Earth? He will never leave us deſtitute and forlorn, but will take hold of every fit-

fitneſs and capacity till he have perfected in us the Divine life and brought us unto Glory.

But becauſe Examples are more prevalent with mankind then Precepts and Inſtructions; that God might not leave any thing undone which would in any kind conduce to our Intereſt, he hath recommended to us the Example of his Bleſſed *Son*, as the faireſt copy of Holineſs, Juſtice, Compaſſion and Self-reſignation, that ever was yet diſcovered to the World. For ſhould we compare him with the greateſt lights that ever ſhone upon the *Gentile* parts of the Earth, they would appear as foils and ſhadows to ſet off his glorious luſtre and Divine ſplendor, as hath already been made good by a Reverend and profoundly Learned Perſon. There is none can hold any equality with the Lord Chriſt; not *Moſes* himſelf, the Divine Lawgiver of the *Jews*, who indeed was *faithful in all his houſe, as a Servant, for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were to be ſpoken after: But Chriſt is a Son over his own houſe, being the Heir of all things, and therefore is counted worthy of more glory than Moſes.* And though we read, that *Moſes* was *meek, above all that dwelt upon the Earth*; yet when he was to

Heb. ch. iii.

fetch

fetch water out of the Rock for the murmuring *Iſraelites*, his ſpirit was ſo farr provoked, that *he ſpake unadviſely with his lips*; and after forty years troubles and vexations in the Wilderneſs, he brought not his people into the land of *Canaan*, but dyed after he had taken a proſpect of the Promiſed Inheritance, which he muſt not *go to poſſeſs*. But on the contrary, the Lord Chriſt whoſe lips were full of Grace and Truth, and in whoſe mouth never was any guile found, not only promiſed a ſpiritual *Canaan*, a Land of immortal peace and reſt, but went alſo himſelf and took poſſeſſion of it, and ſignified the ſame to the world by ſending down his holy Spirit upon his Church. All the time that he dwelt upon Earth and converſed with Men, he was full of the Spirit of Love, Tenderheartedneſs and Compaſſion, perpetually going about doing good, binding up the broken-hearted, gathering the Lambs in his arm, and carrying them in his boſom, and gently leading thoſe that are with young, healing all their infirmities, curing their diſeaſes, and eaſing them of their painful ſorrows. He that was purer then the Sun, and whiter then the Robes of Angels, yet was content to veil his Glory, and put on the dark and courſe

mantle

mantle of our fleſh and blood, that he might teach us humility and ſubmiſſion to the will of God. He whoſe the Earth was, and the fulneſs thereof, would not be born in a Princes Court among the Sons of Nobles; but in a Stable, at a ſmall Town, and among the meaneſt of his Creatures, that he might abate our Pride and Grandeur in oſtentation of our ſelves to the World. His life, though a perpetual Tragedy, encompaſſed with hardſhips and afflictions, and drawn out into many Scenes of trouble and ſorrow; yet was alwayes holy and harmleſs, and never ſtained with the leaſt ſin or unwarrantable action. His Soul was a pure and ſpotleſs Temple, eternally conſecrated to the Divinity reſiding in him: His Heart the holy Altar upon which no unchaſt flames ever burnt, but the fire of Zeal and Love which was kindled from Heaven, and dayly ſent up clouds of Incenſe as a ſweet ſmelling ſavour thither again: His Meekneſs and Patience were no leſs conſpicuous, than thoſe other radiant vertues which rendred him acceptable to God and Man; for *being reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not*; but committed his cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly, and thereby he became glorious in the eyes

of

of God, who recompenced his Indignities, by giving him *a Name above every Name*. If we look at his outward condition, he became poor and needy for our ſakes, that *we through his poverty might be made rich*; for though we read that *Judas* bare the bag, yet his holy Lord and Maſter was forced, by the expence of a Miracle, to pay his Tribute peny to the *Roman* Governor. The Foxes had holes, and the Birds of the air neſts, but the Son of Man had oft no where to lay his Sacred Head, but on a pillow of graſs, and his covering was the bright and ſpangled Canopy of Heaven; and yet we never find him murmuring or diſobliging Heavens Care and Providence by a repining ſpirit: thereby teaching us, that our happineſs lies not in the abundance of earthly Goods, but in the Godlike temper and frame of our minds, and *that having food and rayment we ought therewith to be content*. When he was entring into the ſhadow of Death, and beginning his bitter Paſſion, with what manly courage did he behave himſelf? and, How illuſtrious did he appear in a patient and magnanimous ſuffering all thoſe Ignominies and Diſgraces that were put upon him, beholding through the cloud of ſhame and reproach, the good effects of the travel of his ſoul,

and

and confidently believing, that though he ſate in Darkneſs for a while, yet his Light ſhould break forth from obſcurity more glorious then the Sun when he *rejoyces as a ſtrong man to run his race.* And when his Humanity began to ſink, and that which was Natural in him cryed for eaſe and relief from the heavy preſſures of that doleful Agony, ſo that he deſired *if it were poſſible that that cup might paſs from him*; yet through the life and vigour of the Divine Spirit by which he was acted, he reſigns over his whole will and deſires to the wiſe diſpoſal and pleaſure of his Heavenly Father, *Not my will, but thy will be done*: Hereby giving us a Sacred Method and Rule whereby to demean our ſelves, when the Divine Providence brings us into Calamities and Afflictions; namely, to imitate the Holy Jeſus and follow his ſteps. Let us now accompany him to his painful bed of ſorrows the Croſs, where his friends forſake him and ſtand aloof of, and his enemies compaſs him round, where his holy ears that uſed to hear the melodious accents of Angels, are grated with the prophane obloquies of diſobedient ſinners; and his eyes which beheld the glories of Heaven, and the beauty and luſtre of Divinity, are now forced to ſee the inſtruments

ments of his miſery and ſorrow; yet when his Crucifiers meant him the moſt evil, he breaths forth from a heart which never knew what it was to hate, this paſſionate Prayer for them, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* This alſo was written for our inſtruction, that we might *love our enemies, bleſs thoſe that hate us, and pray for them who deſpightfully uſe us, and perſecute us*; and by ſo doing, become *the children of our Father which is in heaven, who maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.*

But all this would yet have proved weak and ineffectual for the promoting the Divine life in the World, if Chriſt had not viſibly aſcended into heaven, and given us a ſenſible aſſurance of a bleſſed ſtate in the immortal Regions above, that he will take up Humane Nature after due purifications and refinements into a participation of that tranſcendent felicity he is fully poſſeſſed of. For if men had been left in ſuſpence and uncertainties, it would caſt a fatal damp upon their attempts and endeavours after righteouſneſs; but being fully convinced as well of the Exiſtence, as that God will take care of their ſouls when they depart this obſcure and evanid life, and re-

compence their labour and trouble here with ſuch great degrees of Happineſs as ſhall farr ſurpaſs the higheſt calamity they can ſuffer in this World, it cannot but inſpirit their minds with life and reſolution to break through all difficulties and diſcouragements, and with a manly valour fight the good fight of Faith, and never give over till they lay hold on Immortality, and God Crown them as Victorious Conquerors with wreaths of immarceſcible Glory. It is but a groundleſs fancy in ſome to think, that the intuition of the reward propoſed to us, in order to our further progreſs in Holineſs and Virtue, is acting upon Mercenary principles, ſince that Chriſt himſelf in his greateſt Agonies and conflicts ſupported the weakneſs of his Nature with the conſideration of the reward he ſhould receive as the compenſation of his humiliation and ſorrows; for ſo we read, Heb. xii 2. *That he endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame,* ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς, *for the joy that was ſet before him.* Beſides, they underſtand not the nature of the Reward promiſed to us in the Goſpel; for Glory, Bleſſedneſs, and Felicity are not *Other* things from Piety and Holineſs, but the conſummation and perfection of that Divine Nature, whoſe efformation is begun

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in this life. Grace and Holineſs is but Happineſs wrapped up and cloſed, and Glory is nothing but Holineſs explicated and unfolded to it's due latitude and dimenſions. Piety is Heaven masked with a cloud of fleſh, and begirt with ſorrow; and Heaven is Virtue ſhining in it's native brightneſs, and clothed with a Celeſtial ſplendour. And that Ethereal and Paradiſiacal body, with which all believers ſhall be arrayed through the gracious bounty of the Lord Jeſus at the Reſurrection of the Juſt, is the neceſſary appendage of our felicity, and by it's eaſie and obſequious motions will raiſe in the exalted powers of the ſoul, the higheſt ſenſe of love and joy, and delightful enraviſhments of ſpirit. He then that loves Virtue for it's appendant reward, does in effect love it for it ſelf, and is no whit behind him that is attracted by the naked pleaſure reſulting from it, and thinks it eligible amidſt the hoarſe bellowings of *Phalaris* his Bull, becauſe the Reward hath a very great affinity and cognation with Virtue, and is no otherwiſe attainable then by a full and perfect exerciſe of it. This great happineſs therefore accruing to the ſoul of Man when refined and purified from the dregs of Earth and Mortality, is very rationally ſet forth in the Goſpel

to invigorate the minds of men, and raiſe them to the free exertions of the Divine life, and to animate their dying reſolutions when they walk through a troubleſome wilderneſs, and are called to reſiſt even unto blood. And if it were not for the expectation of future Bleſſedneſs, all Religion would fall to the ground, (the inward ſenſe and feeling of the ſoul being ſo much weakned and debilitated by her continual imbibition and attraction of the dregs of the Earthly and mortal Nature, whereby ſhe is become ſluggiſh and inactive, συμπαθῶσα καὶ ὁμοδοξοῦσα τῷ σώματι, her paſſions and apprehenſions being in a manner wholly corporeal) and Truth and Virtue be but idle names or dreams of a ſhadow, exiſting only in the tongues and fancies of Men, but never deſcending into the depth of the ſoul, and impregnating it with their living Image.

Theſe are the grand Inſtruments which the Spirit of God makes uſe of in the Goſpel, to induce and perſwade the World to act under the Government of the Divine life; which if skilfully applyed and managed, will undoubtedly compleat and perfect that bleſſed work which Providence intended them for. For we cannot think that Heaven would alarm the World

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with a falſe report, or raiſe the expectations of Men by a great ſound and noiſe of ſomething extraordinary, when in the concluſion it amounts but to ſome inconſiderable and trifling deſign. The Eternal Son of God, who was that Wiſdom which is the delight of Heaven, and rejoyced in the habitable parts of the Earth, brought down with him from the ſeat of Majeſty, that Sacred and recondit method of recovering lapſed mankind, which was carryed in the pregnant womb of Goodneſs from the dayes of Eternity, and he became our Redeemer, and pervades the very Centre of our Being, and ſhapes and frams his Image of Wiſdome and Righteouſnes there, ſtrengthning our decayes, and ſupporting our weakneſs, and conſuming and expelling all our droſs and corruption by a ſubtle and powerful Energy, which in Scripture phraſe is, to be *Baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire.* We are fallen into a narrow and contracted ſtate, and thoſe Divine forms in our union and fruition of which conſiſted our bleſſedneſs, are quite defaced by our fond longing after, and adheſion to, corporeal features: Now God manifeſting himſelf in our fleſh, renews and perfects thoſe glorious Images again, and ſtamps his im-

preſs upon us; and, as the great conciliating Principle of the corporeal World, figures and ſhapes out of prepared matter the body of a plant; ſo the Holy Spirit frames and ſhapes out the Divine Nature in the lapſed World of Mankind.

But this great purpoſe of the Goſpel, this great deſign and plot which God hath laid to reduce Mankind to that bleſſed ſtate from whence they fell, is wholly fruſtrated and evacuated by the Doctrine of *Irreſpective Decrees*. And that I may not charge it with what it ſtands not guilty of, I ſhall make it good by theſe two Inſtances:

1. It renders ineffectual the purpoſe of God in the Goſpel, by lulling Men aſleep in the lap of Security and Preſumption of their good eſtate, upon the groundleſs fancy of their Abſolute Election from all Eternity. For Men being once initiated and inſtructed in the Myſterie of this profound Doctrine, will with much anxiety and vehemency of mind, contend for the truth of that which they ſo paſſionately deſire to be ſo, and having withal ſo amorouſly courted and eſpouſed their luſts and unruly paſsions, and yet being terrified and affrighted with the laſhes of their

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own Conſciences, they will with great eaſineſs and zeal take ſanctuary in ſo pleaſing an opinion which both gives them a fair countenance to enjoy and reap the pleaſure of their ſenſual paſſions, and ſecures them from thoſe domeſtick furies which perpetually hurried and tormented them, and over and above ſooths them up with a confidence of eternal bliſs and felicity. And he that can attain to this *Plerophory* or full perſwaſion of his Election from before the foundation of the World, hath the *White Stone* given to him (though he be ſo farr from eating of the hidden *Manna*, that he feeds upon nothing but husks and vanities) and his name is enrolled among the Stars, and he is ἔξω βάλης, out of the reach of danger, and if *he fall, he ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for God will raiſe him up*: The gates of hell ſhall never pluck him out of Gods hands, nor ſeparate him from his eternal Love; *for having loved his own, he loveth them unto the end.* The thickeſt cloud of ſin and darkneſs ariſing from his polluted and rotten heart, though it may ſuſpend for a while, yet can never totally diveſt him of Gods paternal Love and favour, becauſe he is one of Chriſt's Sheep, of his little flock, and he *knows him*, and is confident he is known of him: and

though he have lived in vice, and rolled in the dirt and mire of the Earth till the utmoſt Period of his life; yet the holy Spirit will infallibly and irreſiſtibly at the very *Exit* of his ſoul, change and renew it, and caſt the robes of Chriſt's ſpotleſs Righteouſneſs upon it, and then 'tis impoſſible the man ſhould miſs of heaven.

And is this a Doctrine adapted to the carrying on the deſign God intended in the Goſpel, namely, the Reduction of the world to a conformity to the Divine will, to forſake and abandon all their ſinful and falſe wayes, and to live in a univerſal ſubmiſſion and reſignation to his holy Laws and Commands? What proof or evidence doth it bring that it aims at any ſuch thing? Is it in that it declares to a man that Faith and Repentance and every good motion of the ſoul is the irreſiſtible work of God, and that 'tis no more in his Power to confer any thing to his being a good Chriſtian, a juſt and Righteous perſon, than to add one cubit to his bodily ſtature: but if he be not as yet regenerated, he muſt ſtay and wait till that good time come, wherein the Spirit of the Lord ſhall enter into him, and make him a New Creature, *for the wind bloweth where it liſteth?* Or is it in that it affirms, That Chriſt dyed for the Elect,

Elect, and (though the value of his Satisfaction were infinite, and ſufficient to redeem the whole World) for them only, and that his death hath ſatisfied for all their ſins, and that now God imputes the Righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt to them, and upon his account they are eſteemed as righteous as if in their own Perſons they had fulfilled the whole Evangelical Law, though in the mean time their hearts are very corrupt and unſound? Are theſe the Demonſtrations by which this Doctrine of *Irreſpective Decrees* manifeſts it ſelf to come from God? If it bear the Superſcription and Image of God upon it, it is then as he himſelf is, *Light*, and there is no Darkneſs, no mixture of impurity and humane imagination in it; for God cannot patronize any thing but what is holy as he is holy, and pure as he is pure. But if we conſider well, ſuch Poſitions will appear very obſcure and frightful, horrid and amazing, ſavouring of the Prince of Darkneſs by whom they were breathed into the minds and ſpirits of unſanctified Perſons, and by them communicated to the World as the *Arcana* of Chriſtianity, but tending in reality to the everſion of it, and the augmentation and increaſe of the Devils Kingdom. For when Men ſhall hear, that upon

upon ſuch and ſuch Pulpit-ſigns which their Impertinent Preachers deliver to them, they may gather their Election from all Eternity, and that maugre all the Oppoſitions of Men and Devils, they ſhall never fall quite away by a final Impenitence, but aſſuredly recovered by an uncontrollable and peremtory power: when they ſhall be told likewiſe, That Gods calls are at certain times and ſeaſons, and that till they perceive themſelves forcibly inacted and carryed away by the impulſe of the Divine Spirit, all their previous actions are to no purpoſe; Will not theſe things cauſe them to ſit down in lazineſs and take their eaſe, without troubling themſelves with the renovation of their minds, ſith that God will take care for that, and ſoak themſelves in terreſtrial joyes and pleaſures, till the dead-awakening trump (which when it will be they know not) call them from the Grave of ſin and death, as Chriſt did *Lazarus*, and bid them come forth? Will not the imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, and the mantle of his Satisfaction, damp the endeavours of men after real and inward Righteouſneſs and inherent Holineſs, by which they attain to a participation of the Divine Nature, ſince they can have anothers at ſo cheap a

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rate, which will likewiſe be as beneficial and ſtand them in as much ſtead as if they had of their own? Men are prone to palliate their ſin, and take hold of any pretence to ſtop the mouth of their accuſing conſciences, and need no ſuch artifices to lead them into thoſe paths that go down to Hell, and the comfortleſs chambers of death. Their evil Natures and the examples of others, and temptations of Satan are ſufficient to draw them into Vice and Irreligion, that none need diſſeminate ſuch doctrins as ſhall invite them to immorality and iniquity from the Authority and Countenance of Gods word. But it is ſuppoſed that every Chriſtian *Miſtagogus*, who acknowledges himſelf to have a Maſter in heaven, to whom he muſt give an account for the ſouls committed to his charge (if not for theirs, yet for his own felicities ſake) will have ſo much prudence and circumſpection, as not to build on the foundation of the Goſpel, Wood, Hay, or ſtubble, any ſuch Doctrins as will not abide the teſt of Reaſon, but prove both to God, and Mens ſouls very miſchievous and injurious; for though he does it ignorantly, his *work ſhall be burnt, but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved* διὰ δὲ πυρός, *yet ſo as by fire*; that is, with extreme difficulty, as he that hardly eſcapeth out of the fire.

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2. The ſecond Inſtance wherein the Doctrin of *Irreſpective Decrees* inverts and deſtroyes the end and purpoſe of God in the Goſpel is, by leading Men into deſperation. I do not mean, that they ſhould deſpair of mercy ſo long as they continue in their ſins (for this every Criminal ought to do that he may be induced to come out of them the ſooner) but by Deſperation here, I mean, a disbelief of Gods will or power to ſave them, whereby they go on careleſly and reſolutely in a courſe of Rebellion and Iniquity. For being perſwaded on the one hand, that the number of the Elect is but ſmall in compariſon of Reprobates, and that both the one and the other are particularly deſigned and marked out by name, (for *the Lord knows who are his*) and that all the labours of men after the Kingdom of Heaven will prove unſucceſsful and abortive, till God by a high and mighty hand come upon them, and powerfully convince them of the evil of their wayes, and aſtoniſh them with the weight and multitude of their ſins, laying them low and bringing them down (as they phraſe it) to the gates of Hell, and ſhewing them the worm that never dies, and the fire which never ſhall be quenched, and then making bare his arme and demonſtrating his

his Power by lifting them up from thence into the warm Sun-ſhine of his favour, where they ſhall remain as ſecure of Heaven as if they were there already, till God pleaſe by death to tranſlate them unto glory: And being taught on the other hand that whoever finds not this mighty *work of Grace* within him, and feels not this great change wrought in his ſpirit, it is a certain ſign he is in the ſtate of Reprobation, and one of thoſe who were of *old ordained to condemnation:* Men, I ſay, being thus inſtructed and miſguided by Pragmatick zeal, that ſets up it ſelf in the place of Reaſon, and not knowing that ever they had any ſenſe or perception of thoſe forementioned effects being wrought in them, preſently conclude, that there is nothing to be expected for them but a ſure and inevitable Damnation. They never heard the ſound of that breath of heaven which quickens dry bones, and makes them ſtand up and live; nor ever were acquainted with thoſe impetuous agitations and convulſions of ſpirit, whereby the New-birth is formed in them: they never took notice of any ſuch audible *Voice behind them*, ſaying unto them, *this is the way, walk in it:* Nor ever felt any ſuch black tempeſt of horror and trembling ſeazing on them, which

which preſently (the cloud being blown over) was turned into a ſerene gale of quietneſs and peace. Now it being thus with them, what other concluſion can they draw from ſuch Premiſes, but that they are the objects of Gods hatred, and are utterly excluded from all hope of happyneſs by a Decree unalterable as the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians?* For God hath determined (ſay the Reprobationiſts) and purpoſed in himſelf (and he is not as Man that he ſhould lye, or the ſon of Man that he ſhould repent) that he will ſhew mercy to none but thoſe few whom he hath pre-ordained to Salvation for the illuſtration of the Glory of his free Grace. What ſhall I now comfort thoſe deſpairing and diſconſolate ſouls withal? Should I tell them, that God hates nothing that he hath made, that he is the Father of Spirits, and no Parent will tare out the tender bowels of his own dear off-ſpring; they will preſently reply, that though the number of *ſouls be as the ſand of the Sea, a remnant only ſhall be ſaved; a little flock, a tenth, as the ſhaking of an Olive tree, two or three berries on the top of the uppermoſt bough, four or five in the outmoſt fruitful branches*; and though it be true, that God is the Father

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of Spirits; yet he is likewiſe the Supreme Lord of his Creation, and *May he not do what he will with his own? hath not the potter power over the clay?* and therefore they are certainly veſſels of diſhonour, and included in that great multitude which ſhall inherit bitterneſs and ſorrow. Should I declare to them, that God is merciful, and *will have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledg of the truth*, and to this end hath ſent down the Lord Chriſt from heaven to declare to mankind, that he is reconciled unto them, and thinks thoughts of Love and Goodneſs towards them, and that if they will repent and turn to him, he will blot out their tranſgreſſions and remember their ſins no more; that Jeſus Chriſt is become an Alſufficient ſacrifice for the ſins of the whole World, and hath taken away that anger and diſpleaſure that was conceived againſt the Sons of Men, having taſted Death for every Man, and that now he invites all in the moſt condeſcending terms to come unto him, and hath promiſed that *Whoſoever comes unto him, he will in no wiſe caſt out*: And what return now ſhall I have to theſe perſwaſions? they will tell me that it's true, God is merciful, and would have *All*, that is, ſome of all ſorts and con-

conditions of men to be *Saved*, and to this end Chriſt came down from heaven, and was made man, that he might gather together the World of his Elect, and taſted Death for every one of them, and theſe he invites, and theſe ſhall come to him, but none elſe, *for no man can come unto Chriſt, except the Father draw him*; and we have no evidence, or but plauſible grounds, to think, that he either hath or will draw any of us: his Sheep only know his voice and follow him: but we have no proof whereby we can collect our ſelves to be of his fold. Wherefore all our arguments are fruitleſs and vain, and you can give us no ſolid and ſubſtantial comfort to uphold our weak and dying hopes that we are not in a ſtate of Reprobation.

I might here, before I leave this Argument, demand of the ſtout Champions and Promoters of this rigid Doctrine of *Abſolute Reprobation*, What they think of thoſe general calls and invitations of all lapſed Mankind in the Goſpel? and, How they will make them conſiſtent with that ſower *Dogma?* for, to what end or purpoſe were theſe and ſuch like expreſſions inſerted? *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heaven laden, and I*

Mat. xi. 28.

will give you reſt. If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink. He every one that thirſteth; come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, Come ye —— Joh. vii. 37. Iſai. lv. 1. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me. Wiſdom cryeth without, ſhe uttereth her voice in the ſtreets: How long ye ſimple ones* —— *Turn ye at my reproof* —— *The Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come, and let him that heareth ſay, Come, and let him that is athirſt come; and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Rev. iii. 20. Prov. i. Revel. xxii. 17. Why doth Chriſt invite Reprobates to come to him, when he denies them his gracious Aſſiſtance, and intends they ſhall not come? For that they are included here, I think none can queſtion that attends how general the terms are, and if the balance be caſt on either ſide, the advantage will accrue to Reprobates; for *Chriſt came not to call the Righteous* (thoſe who preſume themſelves to be Elected) *but Sinners* (ſuch as the World judges Caſtawayes) *to repentance*: and beſides, the Text plainly implyes the ſame; for who are more weary and heavy laden, than thoſe who are dayly burdened and know not where to reſt? Who are more thirſty

than thoſe who are ſcorcht with perpetual heats, and travel in unknown deſerts and ſolitudes, panting, and gaſping, and lifting up their dying eyes to Heaven, and yet cannot obtain ſo much as one drop of cooling dew to allay the flames and ardors of their parched ſouls? And if it be certain (as it cannot be denyed) that all men whatever are intereſſed and concern'd in theſe paſſionate invitations, it is likewiſe clear as the Noon-day Sun, that all may come and receive the benefit deſigned in them. If it be otherwiſe, can it conſiſt with the Goodneſs, Juſtice, and Veracity of Almighty God thus to tantalize and deceive his helpleſs Creatures in things of ſo great weight and moment?

Wherefore to avoid the dint and ſtroke of this *Dilemma*, the Reprobationiſts have ſtill a reſerve, a κρησφύγιον, to creep out at, and it is this, That the Goſpel is offered to Reprobates to leave them inexcuſable. But they are deceived if they imagine this will ſerve their turn, and ſtand when aſſailed by the ſhocks of ſeverer Reaſon. I muſt confeſs it is a very impertinent piece of work to go about to confute every petty Nicety and Evaſion, which ſcant and ſtraitned ſpirits invent to patch up their ruined and decayed opinions; yet

becauſe

becauſe it comes in my way, I ſhall take the pains to examine it, that men may extricate themſelves from prejudice and error, and ſee where their unwary credulity and innocent ſimplicity hath been betrayed into the Sacrilegious hands of unfaithful perſons, who have (as much as in them lies) hindred the Progreſs of the Goſpel, ſtifled the life of God, and bedwarfed Men in their ſpiritual growth and ſtature, by making them ſtand at a ſtay, or rather go backward in Chriſtianity, through their adminiſtring to them ſuch vitious and unwholeſome nutriment. But to reply to this frivolous Anſwer; I ſay then, the Goſpel which is confeſſedly offered to Reprobates, cannot be ſaid to leave them inexcuſable, and that upon theſe accounts.

1. That *Reprobates* may be left inexcuſable for not embracing the Goſpel, 'tis neceſſary that God ſhould put them into a capacity of yielding and condeſcending to thoſe terms and propoſals he ſhall make to them. But God hath not dealt thus with the greateſt part of the World (according to the Doctrine of Abſolute Reprobation) and therefore is ſo farr from taking from them all excuſe, that he hath left ſufficient arguments, whereby according to the ſtricteſt rules of Reaſon and

Equity they may plead an exemption from puniſhment, though they do not perform that which he commands them. For can it enter into the heart of any good and rational Man to think that God does not only command and exact ſuch things of his Creatures which he never endued them with power to do, but alſo puniſhes them for not performing of them, when yet by his ſecret will he determined they ſhould diſobey him? It was once ſaid of the proud Phariſees, that *they rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves*, and all impenitent ſinners do the ſame: but Mr. *Calvin* will have their refuſal of the Goſpel to proceed primarily from the unſearchable Decree of God, who firſt determined their Deſtruction, and then to accompliſh this, deſigned their contempt of the means of their Salvation. His words are theſe, *Quod igitur ſibi patefacto Dei verbo non obtemperant Reprobi, probè id in malitiam pravitémque cordis eorum rejicietur, modò ſimul adjiciatur, ideò in hanc pravitatem addictos quia juſto, ſed inſcrutabili Dei judicio ſuſcitati ſunt, ad gloriam ejus ſuâ damnatione illuſtrandam.* But moreover, ſhould God declare a Peace and Agreement with the Rebellious Sons of *Adam*, and not only offer to the World a Treaty of

Inſtit. lib. 3. c. 24. §. 4.

of Grace and Salvation (as 'tis granted he doth to multitudes who die in impenitency, and never embrace thoſe bleſſed terms of life) but preſs upon them with the ſtrongeſt motives and incentives of Love and Tender-heartedneſs that infinite Wiſdom can contrive in order to their felicity, having deprived them (though juſtly) of that power whereby they might have rendred themſelves capable of Heaven, by accepting thoſe gracious overtures of Peace, if it had not been taken from them, and ſhould conferr none other upon them in the ſtead, This would be ſuch a ſtrange Oeconomy and diſpenſation towards objects of miſery, as can in no wiſe be deemed πρεπωδες, worthy and becoming the Majeſty of heaven to intereſs it ſelf in. I cannot think that God will allow that in himſelf which he condemns in his Creatures: And if he judge it an unprofitable and ineffectual piece of Charity, and which in it ſelf is no better then a mockery, ſuppoſing our ſelves able to do otherwiſe, to bid an indigent Perſon be warmed and filled, and yet give him not wherewithal he may be ſo; he will certainly eſteem it below the Dignity of his everbleſſed Nature, to invite the Sons of Men to be happy, and inherit the treaſures of a never-fading Glory, when Jam. 2. 15, 16.

notwithſtanding he never affords them the leaſt help or aſſiſtance in their attempts and offers towards it.

2. The external application of the Goſpel to Reprobates, cannot leave them without excuſe, unleſs it be rejected, which in them cannot be denominated a crime, becauſe 'tis inevitable and no more in their power to help, then to alter whatever Decree God will paſs upon them. Heaven had before irrevocably determin'd, and ſo implicated and entangled them in ſuch a train of cauſes as ſhould neceſſarily make them rebel againſt and reſiſt the offers of the Goſpel; and therefore they did but act under the more forcible impulſe of Gods will: Now thoſe actions of Reprobates are ſo farr from deſerving the name of Crimes, that they rather merit the title of Obedience, foraſmuch as their wills are fatally determin'd by an external Power inacting them, and irreſiſtibly exerting ſuch and ſuch motions. A Doctrine long ago maintained by the Stoicks, who aſcribed every thing to the diſpenſation of a ſure and inevitable Deſtiny:

Fatis agimur: cedite fatis
Non ſollicitæ poſſunt curæ
Mutare rati ſtamina fuſi.

Quic-

Quicquid patimur mortale genus,
Quicquid facimus, venit ab alto.
Omnia certo tramite vadunt,
Primúsque dies dedit extermum.

Senec. in Oedip.

Fates guide us, unto Fates yield we,
Care cannot alter their Decree.
For what we suffer, what we do,
Celestial Orbs proceeds from you.
All go in a prefixed way,
The first prescribeth the last day.

And for this Reason Fools and Mad men are not found guilty, nor made obnoxious to punishment, either in *foro externo*, or in *foro conscientiæ* (though they commit such things as otherwise were punishable) because their faculties are overacted by the inordinate motions and rude agitations arising from the body, and the souls instruments whereby she spontaneously moves the corporeal Fabrick, being vitiated and rendred inept, she hath no power to countermand them. To this purpose *Lucian* brings in *Sostratus* reasoning with *Minos* the Judge of Hell concerning the Justice and Equity of his proceedings; οὐκοῦν ὁρᾷς πῶς ἄδικα ποιεῖς κολάζων ἡμᾶς ὑπηρέτας γενομένους, ὧν ἡ κλωθὼ προσέταττε, καὶ τούτους πρῶτ

τοὺς διακονησαμένους ἀλλοτρίοις ἀγαθοῖς; οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἐκεῖνο εἰπεῖν ἔχοι τις ἄν, ὡς ἀντιλέγειν δυνατὴ ἦν, τοῖς μὴ πάσης ἀνάγκης προστεταγμένοις. So that the external oblation of the Gospel to Reprobates, is so far from rendring them ἀναπολογήτους, that (if we consult those faculties God hath given us to be the Judges of right and wrong, good and evill) we shall find their *Apologie* to be as reasonable, as if God should expostulate with them for not creating the World, or raising the dead.

3. The Gospel in propriety of speech, cannot be said to be offered at all to Reprobates without the greatest Hypocrisie and Dissimulation imaginable, much less that by it they should be fairly rendred without excuse. For by the Gospel we understand τὴν καινὴν διαθήκην, *the New Covenant* which God hath made with the world in the Lord Christ, to which both God and Man have set their Seals; God hath promised for his part, that he will give a free pardon and indulgence for all their sins upon their true Repentance, and will assist them in the performance of his Commands with his Divine Spirit and Benediction, and at last upon their perseverance in Holiness bestow upon them Immortality and Life. And Man engages that he will faithfully

fully perform the conditions according to the utmoſt of his power and ability which on his part he is obliged to; which are expreſſed to be Faith and Repentance; a putting off the Old man, and putting on the New; a being buryed with Chriſt in his Death, and riſing again with him to Newneſs of life. And this Notion ſeems to be intimated by the Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth who are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity.* Where στερεὸς, which our tranſlation renders [*foundation*] ſignifies here the Compact or Covenant of God, the στερεότης, ſtability or firmneſs whereof there enforced, aſſures us, that there is no ſalvation to be expected, but according to the contents of that Great Indenture once for all ſealed in the blood of Chriſt, of which, as that indeed is one part, which is inſcribed on one ſide of the Seal [*the Lord knoweth who are his*] that is, he will never fail to own thoſe who continue faithful to him; ſo on the other ſide is moſt Emphatical [*let every man that nameth the name of Chriſt depart form iniquity*] which if he do not, he hath forfeited all the priviledges of Chriſtianity. And it may further be obſerved

ved that the word מוסר which is ſometimes rendred παιδεία, is alſo expreſſed by συνθήκη, *Iſay* 30. 1. as a Learned Critick notes. This being then the Nature of the Goſpel, it cannot without deceit and fraud be offered to Reprobates: for God cannot in his Word command them to believe in Chriſt as their Saviour and Redeemer, without injoyning them to believe a lie; nor can he exhort them to Repentance without Hypocriſie, having by a peremptory Decree ſecluded them from a participation of thoſe χαρίσματα, free and gracious donations, whereby they ſhould be impowered to forſake their ſins, and which he hath obliged himſelf to extend to all the World on his part of the Covenant. If God therefore intended not to own them for his, nor give them his Grace and aſſiſtance to conquer and ſubdue their rebellious Natures, they are not included within the terms of it; And how can any man be convinced of Contumacy, and ſo left inexcuſable for rejecting a Doctrine not at all belonging to him? for conviction ſuppoſes a man to have done otherwiſe then he might have done, and to have left undone ſomething which was in his power to perform, which cannot be affirmed of Reprobates.

To conclude this Argument, if this Doctrine

ctrine of *Irreſpective Reprobation* may be admitted as true and genuine, the whole Miniſtery of the word is but a more ſolemn kind of Pageantry and flattery, and Gods Ambaſſadors, by whom he beſeeches mankind to be reconciled unto him, treat with the greateſt part of them upon falſe grounds and beſide Gods will and intentions, bearing them in hand that God deſires their welfare and happineſs, till they have brought them to the confines of Hell, where they ſhall feel thoſe acute pains to never-dying ages, which were their deſtin'd portion from before the foundation of the World. And now let any rational man judge, whether this Doctrine, as it is here repreſented all along (and 'tis no otherwiſe then may eaſily be proved out of the writings of the favourers of it) do not infinitely obſtruct the progreſs of real and unfeigned Righteouſneſs in the World, and ſcatter a malignant influence upon mens practice in order to Holineſs and a good life, while ſome (as if they had been of Heavens counſel, and ſeen their Names enrolled above) cannot look upon themſelves under any other poſition, but that of Gods peculiar and ſelected ones; and for that very reaſon believe themſelves out of the

——tollantur in altum
Ut lapſu graviore ruant ——

the reach of Apoſtacy and miſcarriage, than which there can be no greater allay to a diligent ſearch after the true and living Nature of God: for while their endeavors after it cool like the air by intervening ſhowers, and they ſwallow every bait, and neglect to excite their powers and faculties by a timely care and induſtry, upon the ſtock of a ſecure confidence of heaven, the enemy forrages and ſpoils, and makes dayly inrodes upon their hearts, and they are upon the margins of deſtruction ere they are aware. Others deſpairing of life, and believing every thing adverſe to their felicity, have no heart to go forward, and either wear out their lives in a ſottiſh ſenſeleſsneſs and ſtupidity, or ſpend them in jollity, and crown their heads with roſebuds and forget God, reſolving to make as good uſe of the preſent time as they can, knowing that when this fleeting and periſhing life is ended, they ſhall be plunged into everlaſting miſery.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A firſt and laſt Argument, wherein is ſhewn that the Doctrine of Irreſpective Reprobation *takes away the liberty of Mans Will, and conſequently leaves no place for reward of Virtue, or puniſhment of Vice.*

THat there is a free principle in Man, a τὸ ἀυτεξέσιον, and τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, a ſelf-moving power and life which is able to ſegregate Truth from Falſhood, Good from Evil, and accordingly elect as the Arguments ſhall appear more or leſs convictive, is not only the judgment of Reaſon, but the ſenſe of the moſt Orthodox Antiquity, whether Theology or Philoſophy; although the Truth is, in this diſeaſed and diſtempered condition all men lie under, the manner of the Wills election ſhews, that it is in the greateſt meaſure inclinable to evil, as will appear further hereafter.

Here the Stoicks ſay the ἀυτεξέσιον of Man is ἀκώλυτον, ἀναπόδρατον καὶ ἀπαραπόδιστον.

And the Greek Fathers add to thoſe Epitheets, ἀυτοκίνητον, ἀυθαίρετον, ἀπλανῆ.

after. And that I may not ſeem barely to aſſert what others ſo ſtrenuouſly oppugn, I ſhall alledge ſome plain and perſpicuous teſtimonies out of the ancient Fathers and Philoſophers, who have manumitted the will of man, and left it free to chuſe Good or Evill, though when it is determined to one, it may be drawn by weightier grounds and reaſons to the election of the contrary part; and when the Arguments on either ſide are equally balanced, it hangs in an equilibration and hovers in ſuſpence till ſomething intervene, which repreſents one of them to be the more eligible,

Tertull. adverſ. Marcion. 2. Tota ergo libertas arbitrii in utrámq; partem conceſſa eſt illi, ut ſui dominus conſtanter occurreret, & bono ſponte ſervando, & malo ſponte vitando: quoniam & aliàs poſitum hominem ſub judicio Dei, oportebat juſtum illum efficere de arbitrii ſui meritis, liberi ſcilicet. Cæterùm nec boni nec mali merces jure penſaretur ei, qui aut bonus aut malus neceſſitate fuiſſet inventus, non voluntate. In hoc & lex conſtituta eſt non excludens, ſed probans libertatem, de obſequio ſponte præſtando, vel tranſgreſſione ſponte committendâ, ita in utrumque exitum libertas patuit arbitrii.

Again,

Again, *Igitur consequens erat, uti Deus secederet à libertate semel concessa homini, id est, contineret in semetipso & præscientiam & præpotentiam suam, per quas intercessisse potuisset, quominus homo malè libertate suâ frui aggressus, in periculum laberetur. Si enim intercessisset, rescidisset arbitrii libertatem, quam ratione & bonitate permiserat.*

Origen. Contra Cels. lib. 4. Ἀρετὴ ἐὰν ἀνέλῃς τὸ ἑκούσιον, ἄνειλες αὐτὴν καὶ τὴν ὑπόσιαν.

Tatianus: Ἐλευθερία τῆς προαιρέσεως ὅπως ὁ μὲν φαῦλος δικαίως κολάζηται, δι' αὐτὴν γεγονὼς μοχθηρός· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐπαινῆται κατὰ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον, τοῦ Θεοῦ μὴ παραβὰς τὸ βούλημα.

Justin Martyr in Apol. ad Senatum. 1. where he tells us, the Christians rejected the Stoical Fate upon this ground; γνωτοῦ δὲ παντὸς ἥδε ἡ φύσις κακίας καὶ ἀρετὴ δεικτικὸν εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἦν ἐπαινετὴ οὐδὲν αὐτῶν, εἰ οὐκ ἦν ἐπ' ἀμφότερα τρέπεσθαι, καὶ δύναμιν εἶχε.

And a little above, Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ καθ' εἱμαρμένην πράττειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ πάσχειν τὰ γινόμενα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μὲν προαίρεσιν ἕκαστον κατορθοῦν ἢ ἁμαρτάνειν.

Et in Apol. ad Imper. Antoninum; εἰ γὰρ εἱμαρτὸν τόνδε τινὰ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι, καὶ τόνδε φαῦλον, οὔθ' ὅστος ἀποδεκτὸς, οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνος μεμπτέος.

August. lib. 3. *de libero Arbitrio. cap.* 5. *Motus quo huc aut illuc voluntas convertitur,*

tur, nisi esset voluntarius atque in nostra potestate, neque laudandus esset homo cùm ad superiora, neque culpandus cùm ad inferiora detorquet quasi quendam cardinem voluntatis.

Et in Epist. 41. ad Valentin. Obedientiam nostram requirit, (Deus) quæ nulla potest esse sine libero arbitrio.

And *Calvin* himself acknowledges that it was a tradition for many ages, *Hoc modo à Deo moveri voluntatem ut nostræ sit electionis motioni Dei obtemperare aut refragari.*

To these I shall add *Hierocles*, who is thought by many Learned Persons to be a Christian, *in Comment. super Carm. Pythag.* which he tells us were not the ἀπομνημόνευμα of some one *Pythagorean*, but ὅλου δὲ τοῦ ἱεροῦ συλλόγου, καὶ ὡς ἂν αὐτοὶ ἔποιεν, ὁμακοΐου παντὸς ἀπόφθεγμα κοινόν. So that in this one testimony we have the sense of the whole *Pythagorean* School or ὁμακόϊον; and it is this, εἰ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ ἐστὶν ἑλκύσαι πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἄκοντας, τί αὐθαίρετα πήματ' ἔχειν αὐτοὺς ἐγκαλοῦμεν; τί δὲ συμβουλεύομεν ὡς τὴν ἔριν οὐ δεῖ προσάγειν, εἴκοντα δὲ φεύγειν; ἢ τί τὰ συμβαίνοντα πρᾴως φέρειν, καὶ ἰᾶσθαι σπουδάζειν ἐπιτάττομεν; ὅλως γὰρ ἡ διὰ μαθήσεως πρὸς ἀρετὴν ὁδὸς ἀποκέκλεισται τοῖς τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀναιροῦσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἔδει ποιεῖν οὐδὲ ἐν μελέτῃ καὶ ἔρωτι τίθεσθαι τῶν καλῶν, εἰ τοῦ Θεοῦ

ἴδιον

ἴδιον ἦν σώζειν ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ καρδίας, καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν πλήρης πίστις μηδὲν παρ' αὐτῷ συνεισφέρουσας· ἀλλ' ὅτως ἂν ἡ αὐτὰ τὴν πολλῶν πονηρίας Θεοῦ ἦν ἔγκλημα.

But for our better underſtanding the nature of Mans Free-will, and in what degrees it is ſeated in him, we muſt conſider all Mankind under a threefold Law or Diſpenſation (which if duly examined, will help us not only to the explication of many difficult texts in Holy Scripture, but to the ſolution and determination of many Theological Controverſies) treated of by the Apoſtle in the ſeventh and eighth Chapters of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*.

1. Firſt there is νόμος ἁμαρτίας ἐν τοῖς μέλεσι, *The law of ſin which is in the members*, Chap. vii. 23. and under this Law are comprehended all ſuch as the Apoſtle, *v.*14. by a figment of his own perſon repreſents, —— *I am carnal, ſold under ſin.* For though the Apoſtle throughout this Chapter ſpeak in the ſingular number, yet he underſtands not himſelf, nor expreſſes his particular ſtate; but by a fiction tranſlates the buſineſs to himſelf, and by it deſcribes the ſeveral ſtates and conditions of men in order to God and Religion; which way of Locution he makes uſe of in ſeveral other places, as 1 *Cor.* x. 29,30. & iv. 6. & vi. 12. & xiii. 2. *Gal.* ii. 18.

For ſurely the Apoſtle, when he wrote this Epiſtle, was not σαρκικὸς, *carnal*, which in the mildeſt ſenſe is to be but in the dawning and infancy of Religion, and is oppoſed to πνευματικὸς, *the ſpiritual man*, who is ſtrong and well grown in Chriſtianity; 1 *Cor.* iii. 1. *And I, Brethren could not ſpeak unto you,* ὡς πνευματικοῖς, ἀλλ' ὡς σαρκικοῖς, ὡς νηπίοις ἐν χριστῷ, *as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal, even as unto babes in Chriſt.* Nor can the other expreſſion [πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, *ſold under ſin*] agree and ſuit with a Regenerate Man, as we ſuppoſe the Apoſtle to be; for, *to be ſold under ſin*, is to be the Vaſſal and bondſlave of ſin, to be under it's command, and totally ſubject to it's licentious dictates: A phraſe peculiarly attributed to *Ahab*, of whom 'tis ſaid, ἐπράθη ποιῆσαι τὸ πονηρὸν, as the *Septuagint*, *he ſold himſelf*, or *was ſold to work wickedneſs*, 1 King. xxi. 25. Now unleſs we will ſay, the Apoſtle was ſold under ſin after this manner (as the *Romans* of old made their captives paſs *ſub haſtâ*, as a token of their ſervility and ſlavery) we cannot imagine he ſpeaks this of himſelf. To this we may add, *v.* 23. *I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and captivating me to the law of ſin* —— All which expreſſions if they be

be underſtood of St. *Paul* when he wrote that Epiſtle, the Character of a Regenerate Man muſt be this, *viz.* That he is one who is carnal, and ſold under ſin, omitting the Good which he would, and doing the Evil which he would not, and through the Prevalency of that other law in his members which wars againſt the law of his mind, he is at laſt overcome and brought into captivity to the law of ſin: which is the very deſcription of an unregenerate and wicked perſon; for *he that is born of God ſinneth not*, neither *can he ſin*, becauſe *he is born of God*; and he that is become the ſervant of God is *made free from ſin*, which is directly contrary to being *ſold under ſin*. Now thoſe who are in captivity to this law of ſin and vice have very poor and exile remains of liberty in their ſouls, as is ſufficiently apparent, in that every pitiful vice enſlaves them, and every importunate luſt uſurpes the Authority of Right Reaſon, and leads them to the commiſſion of the moſt ſhameful and vile actions imaginable. For ſurely if there were ſuch great degrees of liberty of will in this which is the loweſt ſtate of Mans degeneracy, the habitations of the earth would never look ſo ſquallid and uncomfortable, nor juſtice and mercy be out-balanc'd by cruelty and oppreſſion;

filling every place with the calamitous objects of pity and compaſſion. The World could never have been ſo univerſally overſpread with a Deluge of ſin and unrighteouſneſs as now it is, (For the arguments inciting to Vertue and Goodneſs, being far more ponderous then any can be brought for the patronizing ſin and vice, the wills of Men would not fail to be inclined to them) but the fair and ſpotleſs image of Truth would take place in mens minds, and that Divine Wiſdom which deſcendeth from the Father of Lights, exert it ſelf in pure, peaceable, gentle, merciful and impartial actions: But we finding all things go contrary, and *Autæſtheſie* the Grand principle of our deviation from God ſo miſchievouſly powerful, leading men to a life of ſelf-ſeeking, and inamouring them with the fading beauties of this inferior World, making Intellect and Reaſon drudge in unjuſt policy and ſubtlety for the promoting ſelf-intereſt, and carrying on little and private deſigns for the treaſuring up Riches, though by the greateſt Extortion and Rapine, and conſuming and overrunning the poor and innocent like a ſweeping Torrent that leaves nothing behind it but the miſerable tokens of ruine and deſolation: This being the ſtate of

men

men (and farr worſe then I have here repreſented it) under the brutiſh life and law of ſin, what ſigns can they ſhew that they are arrived to any conſiderable meaſure of liberty? For it is not ſome one particular luſt, but the whole unrighteous and Diabolical Nature which mingles and inſinuates it ſelf with the whole frame of the ſoul, and enthrals it to it's imperious dictates. But yet there is ſome freedome left ſtill, and men are not deſtitute of a light though languid and glimmering to lead them to greater degrees of Vertue, if they would ſuffer themſelves to be guided by it: There is yet in every man in his greateſt Apoſtacy and lapſe from the Divine life a Principle of Conſcience accuſing and condemning him for the perpetration of evil; and that regret and ſhame a man finds in himſelf after the commiſſion of impiety, is a manifeſt evidence that he had Power to avoid it.

2. Again, there is νόμος τῆς νοὸς, *the law of the mind or conſcience*, ver. 23. — *Another law warring againſt the law of my mind.* And this is the ſecond ſtate and condition of mankind. For as while they were under the Law of ſin, they were wholly alive unto themſelves, and disjoyned from the Univerſal Spirit of life and true free-

dome, they became at laſt ſtrangers to their own Beings, and ignorant of their high and noble extraction: ſo under this Diſpenſation of the mind or conſcience, there is a διζωία or double-livedneſs within them, being partly alive unto themſelves, and partly unto God, ſometimes lending a patient ear to the ſoft whiſpers of Divine wiſdom, and at other times carryed away with the loud murmurs and noiſes of that worſer Principle; as *Medea* in *Euripides* complains:

Καὶ συνδάκνω μὲν δῖα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά,
Θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῆς ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων.

My Conſcience tells me that I act amiſs,
But fury ſtronger than my Reaſon is.

And now they begin to awake out of their lethargick drowzineſs and ſleep, and open the windows of their ſouls, and receive in ſome beams of the Sun of Righteouſneſs that hath long circled about them, and by his light they ſee themſelves in a broken and unhappy plight, and fain would come out of it, but dare not put themſelves to any trouble or pain, ſo they lay themſelves down again to ſlumber. But conſcience being once forcibly rouz'd up, is not ſo

eaſily

easily lulled asleep, but alarms them with fatal cryes, and shews them the guiltiness that lies upon them, and the mortiferous and dangerous state they are in by reason of the certain punishment all sin draws along with it; thus being affrighted they become Religious out of fear, and account Christianity as a task and burdensome service, imposed upon them only to deprive them of their liberty and abridge them of that freedom they before possessed, and still they bear a love and liking to their lusts, and often visit them with dear embraces. And while they are here, they carry a perpetual warr within them between the Law of sin, and the Law of the mind, sometime the one, and sometime the other prevailing, the life of the body strugling against the mind or reason, and the light endeavouring to chase away the darkness and night. And of this state are to be understood these and such like places of Scripture, *For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would that do I not; but what I hate that do I. So then with the mind I my self serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other;* ἵνα μὴ ποιῆτε, *that ye can-* Rom. vii. Gal. v. 17.

not do [*or that ye do not*] *the things that that ye would.* Now the liberty of Mans will begins to ſpread and enlarge it ſelf under this Oeconomy; for though mens ſtrength be but ſmall: yet God whoſe Goodneſs both Earth and Sea and the whole community of life partake of, cannot behold his own dear life contending with the Powers of darkneſs and never countenance nor abet it, but will lead it victoriouſly through the midſt of hell, and ſecure it from all the Magical ſpels and enchantments of the inferior World; and as this Divine life grows more potent in the ſoul, ſo the liberty and freedom of the will ariſes to a greater latitude and perfection. But if we prove falſe to the Divine light, and notwithſtanding the great helps and means vouchſafed us, pretend ſtill our diſability and infirmity, we may eaſily lapſe again into the brutiſh life, and lie under the Power of the law of ſin, out of which we began to be delivered; and the freedom of our will which was in ſome meaſure enlarged, will be again contracted into narrowneſs and exility, and our laſt ſtate will be worſe then the firſt.

3. But he that makes good uſe of Gods gifts, and behaves himſelf as a good Souldier

dier of the Lord Chriſt, and conquers and ſubdues his rebellious luſts by the power of his Spirit, deſcending into the grave with the holy Jeſus by a profound humility and mortification, and becoming perfectly ἀναπαύλῳ, dead to all the ſelf-feeling and the luſcious reliſhes of the corporeal life, he is arrived to the higheſt diſpenſation of Chriſtianity, which is to be under the νόμῳ τῦ πνεύματος τ ζωῆς, *Law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus.* Such a man is wholly alive unto God, and though he be encumbred with many hardſhips, afflictions and outward calamities which threaten approaching ruine to his body of earth, yet his life is holy, harmleſs and innocent, like the life of Chriſt upon Earth, and his ſoul is ſo affected as his was, having but one only will in the World, which is to annihilate himſelf that God may be all in him. And whoever is arrived to this high pitch of Divine perfection hath attained an enlarged and boundleſs freedom, his life being melted into the Divine life, and his will fitted and adapted to the comprehenſion of the Divine Will. For the true liberty of our wills conſiſts not in an uncertain indifferency and dubious fluctuation between two different objects preſented to our choice (For this ariſes out of the

Rom. viii. 2.

the darkneſs and imperfection of our underſtandings) but when our wills are conformable to reaſon, and ſpontaneouſly elect that which the Intellect propounds to them as beſt, and in it ſelf moſt eligible.

Having thus declared the amplitude and extent of the liberty of mans Will in all it's reſpective capacities, I ſhall now manifeſt and ſhew how it's taken away by aſſerting and maintaining of *Inconditionate Decrees*; which will be no hard matter to evince, if we conſider that both the Predeſtination of the Good to life, and of the Reprobates to deſtruction, neceſſarily pervades and caſts a fatal influence upon their whole lives, I mean that that eternal decree invincibly orders and diſpoſes the actions of men to their reſpective ends, ſo that he who is preordained to happineſs ſhall certainly and neceſſarily be good, and the other who is deſtin'd to perdition ſhall inevitably be wicked and vitious. A caſt of which Doctrine we have delivered to us by *Zanchy* in theſe words, *Non dubitamus itaque confiteri ex immutabili Reprobatione neceſſitatem peccandi, & quidem ſine reſipiſcentia ad mortem uſque peccandi, eóque & æternas pœnas dandi, reprobis incumbere:* that is, *We doubt not to profeſs that*

De Nat. Dei cap. 2. in Reſp. ad Sophiſm.

that from the immutable Decree of Reprobation there lies upon Reprobates a neceſſity of ſinning, and that without Repentance even unto death, and conſequently of ſuffering eternal puniſhments. Piſcator likewiſe will aver the ſame, and more if you deſire it; *In ſumma ſe tueri fatetur, Deum abſolutè decreviſſe ab æterno & efficaciter, ne quiſpiam hominum plus boni faciat quàm reipſâ facit, aut plus mali omittat quàm reipſa omittit:* that is, *That he defends this concluſion, that God hath efficaciouſly from all eternity ſo predetermin'd the will of man to every individual action, that none can do any more good than really he doth; or omit any more evil then* ipſo facto *he omitteth.* To theſe I ſhall add *Szydlovius* as the worſt of the three, *Fateor & ipſe ad communem ſentiendi conſuetudinem crudum nimis hoc videri; Deum poſſe blaſphemiam, perjurium, mendacium,* &c. *imperare:——— quod tamen Veriſſimum eſt in ſe,* &c. that is, *I confeſs that according to common ſenſe, it ſeems very crude to aſſert that God can command blaſphemy, perjury, lying,* &c. *which yet is moſt true in it ſelf.* Now following theſe Principles, it is impoſſible there ſhould be any ſuch things as Vertue and Vice exiſting in the World; for all our actions, whether Good

Ad amic. dupl. Vorſt. p. 175.

Apud Curcellæum de jure Dei in creaturas innocentes, p. 25, 26.

or

or Evil, are the neceſſary effects of an external principle acting and overruling our wills, and we are but the inſtruments which that invincible Power makes uſe of for the doing ſuch and ſuch actions, and can no more withſtand it, then the Sun ceaſe to make day and night. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of mens receiving praiſe of God for their good deeds, which reaſon cannot fathome, if their wills are neceſſarily determin'd *ad unum* (as the Moraliſts ſpeak) and acted by a ſupernatural and irreſiſtible power. No man ever praiſed the Sun for circling the Earth, or the Moon for keeping her courſe, becauſe it is impoſſible they ſhould do otherwiſe, being deſtitute of any ſpontaneous principle, and carryed by the violent ſtream of matter: No more can any one praiſe or diſpraiſe the actions of Mankind, when they have no power to do otherwiſe, but are inevitably determin'd to ſuch and no other, and can no more reſiſt, than the Planets ſtop their conſtant gyres in the vaſt whirlpools of heaven. He that merits praiſe for doing well, it is upon this account, that he might have done otherwiſe: but when God by a Phyſical application of his Power determines the ſoul to act thus, and leaves it not any power

1 Cor. iv. 5.

or

or ability of reſiſting, all the praiſe of that action muſt be due to God himſelf, not to Man who was but the inſtrument, and could not avoid it. *Nemo peccat in eo quod vitare non poteſt*, ſayes St. *Auſtin*. Neither can any action whatever be called a ſin in Man; becauſe he is not left a free agent, but acts fatally and unavoidably, and cannot be diſobedient to that ſuperior force that inacts his will: ſo that Murder, Adultery, Oppreſſion, contempt of Government, and whatever brutiſh action there is elſe, cannot come under the denomination of crimes, but he that commits them may juſtly plead that he could not avoid them, his will being never undetermin'd, and it was not poſſible that his weak ſoul ſhould hinder the ſtronger and more powerful bent and reſolution of heaven. How then can God in juſtice puniſh any man for doing that which he could not help? and, How can that be called a ſin, which is the effect of a neceſſary cauſe? The diſtinction between the act, and the pravity of the act the former of which God wills (ſay they) and works in us, but not the latter, will ſtand them in no ſtead; for in many actions the formality of ſin conſiſts in the very act it ſelf, as in Murder, Adultery, and ſuch like: Thus the eating of the forbidden fruit

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was a ſin in it ſelf, and we cannot diſtinguiſh between the act and the vitioſity; for the very act was forbidden, and the formality of the crime conſiſted not in *Adam* or *Eve*'s eating after any undue manner: but ſimply and barely in the very act of eating. And ſo in ſins of Omiſſion, this diſtinction likewiſe fails, nor will it free Almighty God from the imputation of being the Author of Iniquity and Vice. And it is no wonder to ſee this unworthy Doctrine take ſuch deep footing in ſome mens minds, when they are ſo obſtinately ſet and fixed upon it, that they will entertain any abſurdity, rather then free and unprejudice their underſtandings: Yea ſo hot was this Diſpute grown at *Geneva*, that *Melanchton* in an Epiſtle to *Caſpar Peucerus* amongſt other things relates this, *Scribit ad me Lelius de Stoico fato uſque adeo litem Genevæ moveri, ut quidam in carcerem conjectus ſit, propterea quod à Zenone differret. O miſera tempora! Doctrina ſalutis peregrinis quibuſdam diſputationibus obſcuratur.* And truly if Men would leave off theſe dry reaſonings and altercations about words, and entertain Truth in the love and ſimplicity of it, and as it is in

Jeſus,

Jeſus, in that Divine and Meek Spirit, it is to be hoped that God would ſoon put an end to the dayes of unrighteouſneſs, of formal and outſide profeſſion; and the glory of the Lord would cover the Earth, as the waters cover the Sea.

CHAP. VI.

An Explication of ſeveral Citations of Scripture ſuborned to atteſt the Doctrine of Inconditionate Decrees; *together with a brief examination of ſome Poſitions of the* Contra-Remonſtrants.

I Have now finiſhed the principal and moſt material Arguments I ſhall at this time make uſe of, which I have not cloſely and Syllogiſtically connected, but looſly propounded and diſcourſed of, as well for the delight and pleaſure of the Reader, as that he who is in a good meaſure prepared for the entertainment of them, may light upon ſomething agreeable to his own mind, which will appear to his inward ſenſe as *Apodictical* as a *Mathematical* Notion,

Notion or the evidence of his external ſenſe. For there is ſomething in us which will not fail to embrace whatever it finds ſuitable and congruous to it's own nature; and ofttimes an accidental hint proves more advantagious for the eſtabliſhing and confirming a Truth before but weakly impreſſed upon the mind, then a ſapleſs argumentation formed after the rules of mood and figure. But that I may yet give more light to the precedent diſcourſe, I ſhall bring into view the chief places and Texts of holy Scripture which have been by ſome diſtorted and wreſted to the upholding a Doctrine they are not at all acquainted with, that this *Obex* being removed by rendring the plain and genuine ſenſe of them, there may be nothing remaining to hinder mens free and full aſſent unto it.

*Joh*n vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me* ——— From hence ſome draw ſuch an unexpected concluſion as this, *viz. That there are ſome particular perſons known to God by name, whom he hath from all eternity given to Chriſt; and that all others are devoted to deſtruction.* For the explication therefore of this we muſt know that God

Solent præparationes ad fidem patri tribui, (Mat. xvi. 17.) *ut fidei operatio filio, obſignatio Spiritui.* Grot.

God once promiſed the Lord Chriſt (*Pſal.* 2.) that he would give him the *Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion*; by which we may diſcern, what kind of giving this is which is mentioned here, *viz.* the giving for an inheritance or poſſeſſion, That Chriſt may reign over them; which God doth by his *Vital* preſence pervading their ſouls, and laying hold of every diſpoſition and capacity, and preparing their hearts by his ſoftning and preventing grace, for a benign reception of the Divine Image of the Lord Jeſus: And this Act of God in fitting and qualifying them, is called, *His drawing*, Verſ. 44. *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him*; which attraction is no wayes involuntary and irreſiſtible, as if he who knows all the ſecret receſſes and intrigues of our Natures, were put to his ſhifts, and had no other means to reduce men to righteouſneſs, but by the deſtruction of their powers and faculties: but his drawing is with the *Cords of a Man*, and the *Bands of Love*, with gentle and perſwaſive arguments, farr different from thoſe unaccountable impulſes and violent motions attributed to Gods Spirit by the *Calviniſts*, as *Jer.* xxxi. 3. and *Cant.* i. 4. Hoſ. xi. 4.

Clem. Strom. 4. οὐ δεῖ δὲ ἀρθέντας μετατεθῆναι, ἀλλὰ βαδίζοντας ἀοικέσθαι οἷ δεῖ· τοῦ γάρ ἐστι τὸ ἐλκυσθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθος, διὰ πάσης τῆς στενῆς διελθόντας ὁδοῦ τῷ ἄξιον γενέσθαι τὴν δύναμιν τὴν χάριτος παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λαβεῖν, ἀκωλύτως ἀναδραμεῖν. Now the persons given unto Christ must needs be such who are fitly disposed, qualified and prepared to receive Christ being offered, such who are τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν, *set in order and rankt to life*, Act. xiii. 48. and εὔθετοι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *fitted and capacitated for the Kingdom of God*; Such as are like that *subactum solum*, good and mellow ground in the Parable which is fitted for the receiving the seed of Gods Words. For if by Gods donation of men to Christ, were signified his Electing a certain number to eternal life without any consideration of their future obedience, it would follow:

Luk. ix. 62.

1. That that number could never be diminished: but we read that one of those who was given to Christ was lost, *Joh.* xvii. 12. *Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost*, εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, *but the Son of Perdition.*

2. It would follow, that those who are already elected to Eternal life, and in the favour and love of God, are yet given to Christ, which is very crude and improper; for to what purpose should they be given

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to Christ, when they are already reconciled to God?

3. Christ here speaking to the incredulous *Jews*, if by this exclusive form of Locution he had meant that only some few particular persons preordained from eternity, should come to him (that is, *Believe on him*, Heb. xi. 6.) he would not only have extenuated the sin of the *Jews* in not believing on him, but wholly taken it away by rendring them an account and reason of this their incredulity, *viz.* That they were destitute of that vital influence and grace which streams from a particular Election, and is given only to some certain persons known to God by Name from all eternity.

Acts xiii. 48. — *And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* Here the *Contra-Remonstrants*, as their manner is, whenever they meet with any such word as *Ordained*, *Elected*, or *Predestinated*, presently fancy, that it concludes their absolute Decrees; and so obstinately and wilfully blind are they, that they cannot see any other sense but their own, and obtrude it upon Men as Infallible and Authentick. Such is the Text here in hand, which they they imagine makes much for their cause; but the word τεταγμένοι, hath no such signi-

fication or import that they ſhould put upon it, but is a Military term, and ſignifies to Marſhal, to ſtand ready in rank and file; and accordingly denotes here, thoſe who are fitted and aptly diſpoſed to eternal life: ſo it is uſed 1 *Cor.* xvi. 15. εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτὸς *diſpoſed or devoted themſelves to the function of miniſtring to the Saints.* So the *Greeks* expreſs a well-governed and diſpoſed life by εὐτακτία, and thoſe that live not ſo, the Apoſtle calls, ἀτάκτους, *diſorderly perſons*, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 14. The τεταγμένοι therefore here, hold proportion with the ὅσοι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ in the forementioned place, *Luke* ix. 62. and denotes ſuch who are fitted by due preparations for the reception of the Goſpel. And if the Text were to be expounded of ſuch an abſolute Predeſtination of certain particular perſons, undoubtedly the words θεῖζειν or προθεῖζειν would have been uſed (which had made more for that purpoſe) and not ſuch a Phraſe which is no where in the whole Scripture found to ſignifie Gods eternal Decree. For a further confirmation of this, I will annex *Grotius* his Obſervations upon the place againſt the Calviniſtical Expoſition: 1. *Prædeſtinati omnes unius loci non credunt eodem tempore.* 2. *Neque & omnes qui credunt, ſunt*

eo sensu prædestinati. 3. Neque id arcanum de singulis, qui ad salutem perventuri essent, qui non, Lucæ erat revelatum.

1 *Pet.* ii. 8. *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.*

That which our Adversaries collect from hence is, That there are some ordained and destin'd εἰς ἀπείθειαν to Infidelity, and consequently to Damnation, as the effect of it; therefore there is such a Decree as *Absolute Reprobation*; referring ἔτιθησαν to ἀπειθοῦσιν.

But the invalidity and absurdity of this Explication will appear:

1. That it is a manifest contradiction to say, that the persons here mentioned were Predestinated to Disobedience; for in that it was destinated and decreed of God, it ceases to be disobedience, and is properly an acting according to that immutable will and purpose of God, which is passed upon the inobedient persons: if therefore God wills and determines that they shall reject and contemn his precepts and commands, how are they criminal?

2. It makes God the Author of sin, by predestinating and forcing men to the

commiſſion of it. Theſe words therefore [εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν, *unto which they were appointed*] muſt be referred to οἱ προσκόπτοντες τῷ λόγῳ, thoſe which ſtumble, fall, and bruiſe themſelves at the Word ἀπειθοῦντες diſobeying and rejecting it when preached. So that the ſenſe is, that the ἀπειθοῦντες thoſe which ſtand out obſtinately againſt the Goſpel, ἔθεντο, were decreed and appointed (See *Joh.* xv. 16. *Act.* xiii. 47. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 9.) to fall at that ſtumbling ſtone, and be deſtroyed, which is not that they ſhould be incredulous or diſobedient; but that ſince they would not believe, they ſhould be moſt juſtly puniſhed. Thus the Goſpel is ſaid to be *the ſavour of death to them that periſh*, 2 Cor. ii. 16. And Chriſt is ſaid to be *Set* * *for the fall of many*, that is, *of thoſe that believe not on him*, Luk. ii. 34. not that God appointed Chriſt to come into the World and ſet on foot the Goſpel to deſtroy men, but that he primarily intended by that ſacred Diſpenſation the Salvation of all the World, and decreed that whoever would be diſobedient and contemn thoſe means ſhould periſh by their contempt.

* κεῖται.

Prov.

Prov. xvi. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himſelf, yea even the wicked for the day of evil.*

That there is no mention here of an eternal Decree, appears:

1. That the *Præter-tenſe* פָּעַל is here put by an uſual manner in *Hebrew* for the *Preſent*, *Worketh*, *Maketh*, or *Provides*.

2. There is no neceſſity it ſhould be rendred *impium* the *Wicked*, in the Accuſative caſe; for the Text may very well be read by an *Elliptis*, *And the wicked at the day of Evil*, ſupply, *ſhall fall by the juſt judgment of God.*

3. The clauſe [*for himſelf*] may very well be tranſlated (ſince the *Hebrew Verſion* will bear it) *according to his word*; or as the *Septuagint* πάντα τὰ ἔργα τῷ Κυρίῳ μετὰ δικαιοσύνης· φυλάσσει δὲ ὁ ἀσεβὴς εἰς ἡμέραν κακήν. The ſenſe therefore of the whole verſe briefly is this, That God by his perpetual Providence and Government of the world, not only takes notice of, and regards good and holy men, that all things may tend to their welfare: but likewiſe beholds and obſerves the actions of wicked perſons; and that they may not think they ſhall go unpuniſhed, and ſay in their hearts, *There is no God*, moſt wiſely orders, that a juſt *Nemeſis* ſhall overtake them for their ſins and

impieties, and at laſt a final vengeance and deſtruction ſeaze upon them.

John xii. 39, 40. *Therefore they could not believe, becauſe that* Eſayas *ſaid again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardned their heart, that they ſhould not ſee with their eyes, nor underſtand with their heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them.*

I cannot ſee how this Text makes any thing for the *Calviniſtical Reprobation*; but there are ſome men ſo ſubtle and acute, that they eſpie ſomething or other for the patronizing and defending their ſelf-choſen opinions almoſt in every verſe of the ho'y Scriptures. That which they moſt aime at and would inforce from hence is, That this Excæcation and obduration is a Phyſical Action of God upon the mind, ariſing from his peremptory Decree of Reprobation *: then which nothing is more inconſiſtent with or unworthy of the Divine Majeſty: But the Excæcation here mentioned ſeems not to be an Act of Gods, becauſe it is ſaid *Excæcavit, he hath blinded*, in the third Perſon; and preſently ſub-

* *Sicut credere nolunt Reprobi, ita certum eſt non poſſe velle credere, quia tenebræ in quibus nati ſunt, lucem comprehendere non poſſunt. Deus autem (inquit Paulus) quos vult miſeratur, & quos vult indurat.* Beza in Annot. in Joh. xii. *v.* 39.

ſubjoyned, *Ne ego ſanem, leaſt I ſhould heal them*, in the firſt; *Excæcavit* therefore may be taken imperſonally for *their eyes are blinded*, by whomſoever, or by what means ſoever it came to paſs; as *Act.* xxviii. 24. *Some believed the things that were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.* But we will ſuppoſe it to be an action of Gods, yet that action can be no other then penal, which by the juſt judgment of God is inflicted on them for their precedent crimes, and not from any Abſolute Decree; as is expreſſed *verſ.* 37. *But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* And in *Mat.* xiii. 13. their incredulity is put as the cauſe and reaſon of their blindneſs, *Becauſe ſeeing they ſee not; and hearing they hear not*; which clears the like expreſſion in *Mark* iv. 12. *That ſeeing they may ſee and not perceive*; as if their *Excæcation* were primarily intended by Chriſt; for whereas it is ſaid *that ſeeing*, it is a plain indication that they did either underſtand thoſe things which were propounded to them, or at leaſt might, but would not underſtand them. Whereas 'tis ſaid likewiſe *they could not believe*, it is not to be underſtood as if they wanted Power and ability, but that their minds and inclinations were wholly averſe to it, being ad-

addicted and carryed after ſelf-intereſt, as 'tis ſaid, *verſ.* 43. Many did not confeſs Chriſt, becauſe *they loved the praiſe of men more then the praiſe of God*: For oft-times thoſe are ſaid *not to be able*, whoſe mind is altogether averſe to this or that, although they might eaſily do it if they would. Thus a Candid and Ingenuous perſon cannot Lie, a Liberal perſon cannot be fordid and baſe; and, *he that is born of God* ὁ γεγεννημένος ἁμαρτάνειν, *cannot ſin*, 1 John iii. 9. and Chriſt himſelf once could *do no mighty work*, Mark vi. 5. See 2 *Cor.* xiii. 8. *Acts* iv. 20. *John* viii. 43.

Jude ver. 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation* ——

The great ſtreſs of the *Calviniſts* Argumentation from hence lies in the words πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι, which we (though ſomething improperly) render [*of old ordained*] but might better have tranſlated *predicted*, for ſo the word ought to be taken here, for a prediction or deſcription aforehand, by which theſe kind of men, and alſo their Impoſtures and their κείμα have been long ago deſcribed, denoted and depainted out in their proper colours and lineaments. Such is the propriety of

of προγεγραμμ., only here by the addition of εἰς τοῦτο it ſignifies *Propheſie*, as is intimated in *ver.* 17, 18. of this Epiſtle. [εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα] to this judgment, that ſince they rejected the truth, and turned the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, and denyed the Lord Chriſt that bought them, they might be as inſtruments for the exploration of Saints and true Believers, (as God is ſaid to make uſe of falſe Prophets to try his People, *Deut.* xiii. 3.) and after be deſtroyed with all falſe Chriſtians and Rebellious *Jews*.

Mark xiii. 22. *For falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets ſhall riſe and ſhall ſhew ſigns and wonders, to ſeduce, if it were poſſible even the Elect.*

Hence the *Contra-remonſtrants* collect an Abſolute and peremptory Decree, becauſe 'tis utterly impoſſible to ſeduce or draw the Elect from the Faith: but while they argue thus, they declare to the World, that they neither underſtand the [*impoſſibility*] nor [*Elect*] here mentioned. For εἰ δυνατὸν in this place doth not denote an abſolute impoſſibility (otherwiſe Chriſt's exhortation to them *ver.* 23. *to take heed*, had been wholly uſeleſs and ſupervacaneous) but is uſed to expreſs the intent

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and deſign of the Falſe-Chriſts and falſe-Prophets; as if he ſhould ſay, They will omit nothing nor leave any means untryed, whereby to compaſs their pernicious and wicked purpoſe. The ſame form of ſpeech we have, *Rom.* xii. 18. εἰ δυνατὸν, *If it be poſſible, as much as in you lies, live peaceable with all men*: that is, *doe your endeavour, do what lies in you*, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, *as much as lies in your power*, being an *Exegeſis* of εἰ δυνατὸν, *if it be poſſible*. But why muſt the ἐκλεκτοὶ be ſuch as are abſolutely and immutably Elected? Sure I am, the word ἐκλεκτὸς, is uſed where there is no denotation of any Election from all eternity. To avoid multiplicity of quotations, we may inſtance in two or three more remarkable paſſages: The *Hebrew* word to which this anſwers is בחן which ſignifies, *to approve, examine* and *chuſe*; and accordingly *Prov.* vii. 3. the *Hebrew* word is בחן, and our *Engliſh Verſion* reads, *The Lord tryeth the heart*, and the *Septuagint* ἐκλεκτὴ καρδία πρὸ Κυρίου, *hearts elect before the Lord*. And in *Eſay* xxviii. 16. λίθον ἐκλεκτὸς, is rendred *a tryed ſtone*. To this purpoſe *Eccleſ.* xlix. 7. *Jeruſalem* is called πόλις ἐκλεκτὴ, *an elect City*; that is, *preferred and eſteemed before others*. Sometimes the word ἐκλέγειν ſignifies the deſigning and chuſing

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to ſome office and peculiar employment, a ſequeſtring ſome from others, *Luke* vi. 13. *And when it was day, he called unto him his Diſciples, & ἐκλεξάμενος ἀπ' αὐτῶν δώδεκα, and of them he choſe twelve.* To add no more, *Rufus* is called by St. *Paul*, *Rom.* xvi. 13. ἐκλεκτὸν ἐν Κυρίῳ, *Choſen in the Lord*, that is, *a ſpecial Believer*; for as to his particular perſon, what Decree had paſſed on him was unknown to the Apoſtle, therefore it muſt be that he receive this *Elogium* from his viſible Chriſtian deportment.

2 *Theſſ.* ii. 13. *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.*

That the Apoſtle treats of no ſuch abſolute and eternal Election as our Antagoniſts imagine, appears:

1. In that this form of ſpeech being directed to all the *Theſſalonians*, it would follow, that the whole viſible Church of them were elected unto glory, which were a very precarious Aſſertion.

2. This kind of Election being abſolute and irreverſible, it were impoſſible that any of

of the Believers mentioned in the Text, ſhould fall and deſert the faith of the Goſpel, which is altogether inconſiſtent with that ſolicitous and earneſt Exhortation, twice inculcated in this Chapter, *ver.* 1, 2, & 15. wherein he beſeeches them *by the coming of the Lord Jeſus, that they be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or troubled*; and again, *That they ſtand faſt, and hold the traditions which they have been taught by word or Epiſtle.*

3. This Separation of them from the reſt of the *Heathen* World, was grounded upon their good converſation and belief of the Goſpel, which directly thwarts an Inconditionate Decree ——— *Through Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*

Ἑλετο ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, *Choſen or ſeparated you from the beginning*] that is, *from the beginning of the Preaching of the Goſpel:* ſo that they were among the firſt of thoſe that gave up themſelves to the obedience of the faith: This is all the import of this phraſe: the former part of it we have *Deut.* xxvi. 18. *The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his people*; in the *Septuagint* Κύριος εἵλετο σε σήμερον λαὸν, which reſpected Temporal benefits: but here by the Apoſtle 'tis added εἰς σωτηρίαν, *to Eternal*

nal Salvation, which is reſerved only for Chriſtians. Now as the *Jews* by their diſobedience might become *non populus*; ſo *Chriſtians* may diſinherit themſelves, and fruſtrate by their evil wayes, Gods intentions of bringing them unto glory. As for the addition of ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, it no way extends it to an Eternal, but Temporal Election or Separation, and is uſed in Scripture to denote the beginning of the Preaching of the Goſpel, as in 1 Joh. ii. 7, 24. *I write no new Commandment to you, but an old Commandment which ye had* ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, *from the beginning: the old Commandment is the word which ye have heard* ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, *from the beginning.* Again, *Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard* ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, *from the beginning.* See *Joh.* xv. 27. The old Latine tranſlation reads it *Primitias*, ἀπαρχὴ, that is, *that they were ſet apart and conſecrated to God as firſt-fruits by the Preaching of the Goſpel*; which phraſe the Apoſtle likewiſe uſeth, *Rom.* xvi. 5. —— ὅς ἐστιν ἀπαρχὴ, *Who is the firſt-fruits of* Achaia *unto Chriſt.*

Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30. *And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called* accor-

according to his purpoſe. For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born amongſt many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called, and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

Here (ſay the *Calviniſts*) you may ſee the chain of Salvation, and behold how the beloved of God are drawn by each golden link, till they are brought to their appointed bliſs and happineſs. This is the ſacred method of Gods Predeſtination, in which he goes by certain ſteps and degrees, and in every one of them magnifies the riches of his free and undeſerved Grace to his choſen and ſelected ones. But to leave theſe light and aiery fancies, I ſhall lay down that which I judge to be the proper and genuine ſenſe of the Apoſtles words. In order to which we muſt know, That the ſcope and intent of almoſt this whole Chapter is, to comfort the Afflicted and calamitous, and to exhort them to continue ſtedfaſt and unmoved in the love of God, and obedience of his commands, adding ſeveral weighty Reaſons and Conſiderations to incite them to it, amongſt which theſe two have their ſtrength and cogency.

1. That

1. That all the troubles and moleſtations they ſuffer here, ſhall work together for their good, *ver.* 28. 2. In that they are predeſtinated to be conformed to the image of Chriſt, who through many hardſhips and afflictions made his way unto glory, *ver.* 29, 30. So that the Predeſtination here mentioned, is to be underſtood of a deſtination to the Croſs, and not of any ordination to Faith, Life and Glory. The ſum of all is this, That all afflictions and croſſes however burdenſome and grievous they may be, ſhall work together for the good of thoſe that love God, and ſincerely and cordially adhere and cleave unto him; and though now for the preſent they may be exerciſed with many hardſhips, and environ'd with calamitous accidents: yet the event ſhould be glorious, and the Sun of comfort at laſt ariſe and diſpel thoſe thick clouds of ſorrow, and bring on a ſerene and perpetual day of felicity and joy. For whom he did approve of as faithful, he determined ſhould arrive to their felicity by the ſame way that Chriſt did, who by ſuffering entred into his Glory, to the intent that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did thus approve of, them he intended to call to a conformity to his Son; and whom he

thus calls, he will likewiſe juſtifie, that is, account them as righteous; and whom he thus juſtifies, he will hereafter glorifie, if they deſert not the ſigns and tokens of the Croſs, as he ſaid before, *ver.* 17. *If ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that we may be alſo glorified together.* For though there be no condition expreſſed, yet it is evidently implyed in the nature and matter of the thing it ſelf. See *Expoſition of Eph.* i. 3, 4. *infra.* That this is the ſcope of the Text will be further evidenced from the uſe of the words and phraſes in other places of Scripture: That the κλητοὶ κ᾽ πρόθετον, are no more then the real and unfeigned ſervants of God, is manifeſt, in that κλητὸς is in ſeveral places of the Old Teſtament uſed to ſignifie a Follower, Adherent or Servant, eſpecially in an Army, as 1 *Kings* i 41,49. and κ᾽ πρόθετον, is all one with τῇ προθέσει τ῀ καρδίας, *Acts* xi. 23. *With full purpoſe of heart*, that is, willingly, unfeignedly and conſtantly. That προγινώσκειν is of the ſame import with the ſimple Verb γινώσκειν and γινώσκειν, and ſignifies no more then an approbation and firm love of thoſe who are thus conformable to Chriſt, is evident from theſe and ſuch like Texts of Scripture, *Rom.* xi. 2. *God hath not caſt away his people* ὃν προέγνω, *which he foreknew*, that is,

κλητοὶ κ᾽ πρόθετον.

προγινώσκειν.

which

which he owned for his. So 1 *Cor.* viii. 3. *But if any man love God,* ὁυτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, *the ſame is known of him,* that is, *him God approves and likes of.* Hence it is ſaid, *that God knows not wicked men,* Mat. vii. 23. And our faith and obedience of Gods commands is called our *knowing of him,* Joh. xvii. 3. & 1 Joh. ii. 3. By *Gods calling* here, is undoubtedly meant his *Vocation to the Croſs,* to which all Believers are deſtined, as appears from 1 Pet. ii. 20, 21. ——— *But if when ye do well and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God,* εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, *for hereunto were ye called.* And 1 Theſſ. iii. 3. *That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions, for your ſelves know* ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα, *that we are appointed hereunto.* And if it were underſtood of *Gods Vocation to faith,* it would follow:

1. That he foreknew, that is, approved and delighted in ſinners before he called them to the faith, and ſo before they were in Chriſt.

2. That not only Vocation, but Juſtification and Glorification muſt belong to thoſe that are only foreknown or Elected: Which abſurdities and inſipid illations are avoided by the former Expoſition.

Epheſ. i. 3, 4, 5. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt: According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love: Having Predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will.*

The ſenſe and ſcope of theſe Verſes will be very eaſie and conſpicuous by the illuſtration of thoſe two Phraſes, ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς, *verſe* 4. and προορίσας ἡμᾶς, *verſe* 5. The Election therefore ſpoken of here, ſeems to denote *Vocation by the Goſpel*, not ſimply ſo: but imports and includes the Decree of calling the Jews and Gentiles by the Goſpel; as 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works*, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, *but according to his own purpoſe, and grace which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began.* Now the ſubject matter of this Election are Believers as ſuch, and whoever actually believes, comes under that grand Decree of Election to life and immortality, deſigned and in-

intended in the Lord Chriſt before the foundation of the World; and whoever believes not, falls under the dint of the other Decree of death and deſtruction. According as our Saviour himſelf hath delivered to us, *Mark* xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* And for a further elucidation of this, we may take notice, that it is not ſaid ſimply in the Text, that *God hath bleſſed us*, but [*in Chriſt*] and [*as he hath choſen us in him*] therefore *Bleſſing*, v. 3. and *Choſen*, v. 4. belong both to the ſame matter; for καθὼς a term of proportion makes the connexion thus, *That God hath bleſſed us in Chriſt*, that is, His actual preſent bleſſing them, at that point of time, was correſpondent to what God had decreed before the foundation of the World. Now what the bleſſing here ſpoken of is, appears:

1. In general by the addition of πνευματικῇ and ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, *a ſpiritual bleſſing*, or *bleſſing in things pertaining to heaven.*

2. By the Predeſtination (in order of nature precedent to it) which is ſpecified to be εἰς υἱοθεσίαν, *to Adoption.*

3. By what is here added τὸ ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους, all which ſpecifie the matter of

Election here ſpoken of, to be the ſame as of his bleſſing us, *viz.* our holy and blameleſs converſation, a Spiritual and Chriſtian obedience; and ſo 'tis ſaid, *Chap.* ii. 10. that Good Works are the things to which God had before prepared (elected) us that we ſhould walk in them. So that from hence we may note, that the ſubject of Gods Election is not Mankind ſimply conſidered as Creatures, nor yet as fallen, but as actual and perſevering Believers.

4. By ἐν Χριστῷ, *in Chriſt*, ſpecifying Chriſt to be the means of bringing all to a holy life; which he did by coming into the World, and dying and riſing again. Where we may likewiſe obſerve, that our Election even as our Bleſſing, is in Chriſt: but no man can be in Chriſt, unleſs he be conſidered as faithful: and hence alſo we may likewiſe ſee the vanity of that Doctrine which makes Chriſt only the executor of Gods abſolute Will and Decree, but not the foundation of Election, contrary to the Apoſtles aſſertion, *that God hath choſen us in Chriſt.*

The other phraſe remains, προορίσας ἡμᾶς, *Predeſtinated us.* By which we are given to underſtand that the Apoſtle both here and elſewhere, makes it his buſineſs to ſhew that the temporal diſpenſation of things,

things, was long before determined and decreed upon; which antecedent conſtitution is called προορίζειν, *to predetermine*, πρόθεσις, *purpoſe*, and ſometimes πρόγνωσις, *foreknowledge*. The firſt of theſe is uſed, *Acts* iv. 28. (where Gods permiſſion and provident direction of whatever hapned to the Lord Chriſt is denoted) *To do whatever thy hand and thy counſel* προώρισεν γενέσθαι *determined before to be done*. See 1 *Cor.* ii. 7. The *Verb* of the ſecond is uſed *Rom.* iii. 25. ὃν προέθετο ὁ Θεὸς, *whom God hath ſet forth, or foreordained to be a propitiation* —— The *Verb* of the laſt we have, 1 *Pet.* i. 20. προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, *who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the World* —— The *Noun* we have, *Acts* ii. 23. where likewiſe Gods permiſſion and provident direction is denoted, τοῦτον τῇ ὡρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔκδοτον λαβόντες, *him being delivered* (or given out) *by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken* —— So 1 *Pet.* i. 2. κατὰ πρόγνωσιν Θεοῦ πατρὸς, *According to the foreknowledge of God the Father* —— Now theſe antecedent Conſtitutions are ſometimes abſolute, and ſometimes conditional; and although the condition be not always affixed, yet may it ſufficiently be underſtood when 'tis implyed, by the na-

ture of the matter it ſelf, and oft-times by the preceding words, and ſubſequent Admonitions and Exhortations. Thus the purpoſe and Decree of God to ſend Chriſt into the World, is to be underſtood abſolutely; but his Election of men to ſalvation in Chriſt is hypothetical and conditional, *viz. If they believe and perſevere in the faith.* Of theſe conditional Conſtitutions we have ſeveral inſtances; *Rom.* i. 13. St. *Paul* ſayes προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *I purpoſed to come unto you*, viz. *if other important affairs did not hinder me.* See *Rom.* viii. 29. St. *Paul* was *ſeparated of God to the Apoſtolical function*, *Gal.* i. 15. but it was, *if he were not diſobedient to the heavenly viſion*, Act. xxvi. 19. So here, the Apoſtle declares to the *Epheſians*, that God had predetermined not only to make them of enemies, friends; but to adopt them as his children, and to deal with them as Sons, *viz.* if they obeyed their Vocation as they ought.

Rom. ix. 11, 13, 16, 18, 22. *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of Works, but of him that calleth. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated. So then, it is not of him that willeth,*

leth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth. What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much long-ſuffering the Veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction.

Verſe 11. This verſe inſerted in a Parentheſis, is only a proof of what the Apoſtle declares to the Jews, *viz.* That the ground and foundation of Gods Election of *Jacob*, and prelation of him before *Eſau* (under the Perſons of whom are denoted the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the one conſidered without any reſpect of their Legal Services, the other of their Idolatries) was not upon conſideration of the future Goodneſs of the one, and ſtubborn Refractorineſs of the other, but merely an act of his own free will and pleaſure, foraſmuch as the choice was pitched upon before either of them were born.

By the phraſe κατ' ἐκλογὴν, is meant no more then the deſign or purpoſe of God in preferring one before the other; as *Rom.* xi. 28. κατὰ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοὶ, *Beloved as touching the Election*, *i. e.* In reſpect of the undeſerved promiſes made to them of peculiar favour for *Abrahams* ſake. And the *Hebrew* בחר which for

the

the moſt part is rendred ἐκλέγων, is alſo denoted by προαιρῶν, *Deut.* vii. 6. *Prov.* i. 29.

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος.] By [*Calling*] here, ſet in oppoſition to ἐξ ἔργων, doing any thing on intuition of merit, is meant Gods peculiar favour and act of his ſpecial Providence and Grace, in the diſpenſation of which he refers to himſelf a freedom and liberty without reſpect to any qualifications.

Verſe 13. That the Text doth not denote in it's proper extent and ſignification the perſons of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, ſimply conſidered, but their Poſterity, appears:

1. From the Reſponſe of God to *Rebecca*, when ſhe complained upon the childrens ſtrugling in her womb, *Gen.* xxv. 23. *Two Nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people ſhall be ſeparated from thy bowels: and the one people ſhall be ſtronger then the other: and the elder ſhall ſerve the younger.* Now 'tis plain, that the elder's ſubjection to the younger never had any completion in their life-time, but rather the contrary, as appears by their ſtory.

2. This Expreſſion [*Jacob have I loved*, &c.] was not delivered or ſpoken before the birth of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, but ſome hundreds of years after; for it is no where el-

elſe to be found in Scripture, but in *Mal.* i. where the Prophet treats not of the perſons of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, but of their Poſterities, the *Edumeans* and *Iſraelites*, it being no new thing to call whole Nations deſcending from the ſame linage, by the Brothers names from whom each ſprung, as *Numb.* xx. 14. *Thus ſaith thy Brother Iſrael* —— and *Deut.* xxiii. 7. *Thou ſhalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy Brother.*

Again, Neither the love nor hatred of God in this place has any relation to a peremptory Election to, or Reprobation from Eternal life and happineſs: For

1. If this were loving from eternity, God could not afterward have given *Jacob* and the people of *Iſrael* a Law, annexing a conditional benediction to it: For that which God had decreed to them by an immutable and ſpecial Decree, could not be promiſed to them under the condition of obedience; for it implies a contradiction that a thing ſhould be abſolute and conditional at the ſame time, and to the ſame perſons.

2. If this love were abſolute and eternal to *Jacob* and his Poſterity, they could not then have fallen from Gods grace and favour, which we find ſome of them did, 1 *Cor.* x. 5. *Heb.* iii. 19.

As

As therefore the love here mentioned cannot ſignifie an Election to eternal life, ſo neither can the Hatred denote eternal Reprobation.

1. Becauſe 'tis often taken otherwiſe in Scripture, comparatively for a leſs degree of love, and therefore may admit of a more candid interpretation: *Deut.* xxi. 15. *If a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated,* i. e. If he have one that he loves leſs then the other; For it being lawful at that time to divorce their wives, it would ſcarce ever happen, what the text implies, if hating were taken properly: for who would retain a wife that he really and truly hated, when he might put her away, and take another which he loved better. So *Gen.* xxviii. 31. *When the Lord ſaw that Leah was hated,* i. e. as in the precedent verſe, *loved with a leſs degree of affection then Rachel.* After the ſame manner muſt the words of Chriſt be expounded in the Goſpel, *Luke* xiv. 26. *If any man cometh to me,* καὶ οὐ μισεῖ, *and hateth not his Father and Mother* ——— i. e. *if he love not me more then them, he cannot be a true Chriſtian.*

2. That cannot be the object of ſuch an eternal and implacable hatred, which hath no cauſe of hatred in it; but *Eſau* had no

no cauſe in him, that God ſhould thus hate him: *Before the children had done good or evil.*

Verſ. 16. ἄρα οὖν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος, οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος] we may here obſerve that they do very much miſconſtrue and miſapply the words of the Apoſtle, who make this the ſenſe of them, as if it were not at all requiſite for obtaining life and eternal Salvation, that we ſhould live well, and diligently attend to the exerciſe and performance of faith and good works: This I ſay, is a dangerous error and miſtake, and every holy man experiences the effects of the contrary to be moſt true. For 1 *Cor.* ix. 24. all Chriſtians are plainly and diſtinctly commanded τρέχειν, *to run that they may obtain the heavenly* βραβεῖον, *and reward of their labours*; πάντες μὲν τρέχουσι —— *all run, but one obtains the prize*; οὕτω τρέχετε, *ſo run that ye may obtain.* So likewiſe *Heb.* xii. 1. —— δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν, *Let us run with patience* —— And there is the ſame reaſon of τὸ θέλειν, *Joh.* vii. 17. ἐάν τις θέλῃ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν, *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine* —— And upon this account, incredulous and unbelieving perſons are reprehended for this very thing that they *Will not come unto Chriſt*, John v. 40.

And

And Chriſt complains of *Jeruſalem* ἐγὼ ἠθέλησα, καὶ οὐκ ἠθελήσατε, *I would, but ye would not.* Wherefore when it is ſaid here [*It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*] we muſt not underſtand it of that Will whereby a man would do what God commands him: But the ſenſe is this, That it is not ſufficient for the acquiſition of Divine favour and grace, that we ſeek it after any ſort; but it neceſſarily lies upon us, and ſtands us in ſtead to endeavour after it by that way and means by which God hath declared to us it may be acquired. And hence the Apoſtle gives an indication of the fruitleſs attempts of the Jews in contending with ſo much zeal and noiſe for the obedience of the Law, when God required faith in his Son whom he had ſent into the world of them, and had openly declared that men ſhould be accounted righteous, not by the works of the Law, but by the faith of the Goſpel.

Verſe 18. The word σκληύνει [*hardens*] is by many miſunderſtood, and therefore will need ſome explication: That God hardened *Pharaoh's* heart the Scripture teſtifies, but of the manner how it was done we are now to enquire. Some underſtand this *hardning of the heart* to be a poſitive act of God, either by conveying a new

new degree of obſtinacy and refractorineſs into it, or by intending and corroborating that which was in it before: But this is neither agreeable to the purity and ſimplicity of the Divine Nature, nor conſentaneous to any Oeconomy which God has yet manifeſted to the World; for his Holineſs is ſuch that he cannot be the cauſe or Author of any Impurity or Rebellion, which this way of ſolution would certainly charge upon him. The Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hammond* in his Annotations upon this place obſerves, *That God is not ſaid to harden* Pharaoh's *heart (although he predicted it before in* Chap. iv. 21. & vii. 3.) *till after the ſixt judgment, and the addition of a ſpecial warning given him by* Moſes *before that, and then 'tis ſaid,* Exod. ix. 12. *as it were in a new ſtyle,* The Lord hardens *Pharaoh's* heart: By which computation of time when God hardned *Pharaoh's* heart, he thinks it will appear what is the proper intimation of hardning, *viz. The total ſubſtraction of Gods grace of Repentance from him, in the ſame manner as when one is caſt into Hell, which* Pharaoh *at that time had been, had it not been more for Gods Glory to continue him alive a while in that deſperate, irreverſible condition, which ſure was no whit worſe to him, but*

ſome-

ſomewhat better and more deſirable, then to have been adjudged to thoſe flames all that time. But methinks (with ſubmiſſion to more excellent judgments) the main of this Explication is not ſo ſolid, ſo rational and coherent as might be deſired: For,

1. It may very well be queſtion'd, Whether thoſe plagues which were inflicted on him after the immiſſion of the ſixt judgment, and conſequently after God is ſaid *to harden his heart*, were not as efficacious for his amendment, and ſo deſigned of God, as any of the former? That they were ſufficiently convictive, and of force and power enough to ſubdue and conquer his untamed ſpirit, if he would have made a right uſe of them, is evident, as well from Gods upbraiding the people of *Iſrael* of incredulity upon this very reaſon and account, that they refuſed to be wrought upon by thoſe many notable miracles and ſigns done in the midſt of them, *Deut.* xxix, 2, 3, 4. as from the temporarious penitence, and ſuddain ſenſibility of his miſcarriage which the actual and preſent immiſſion of judgment drew from him, *Exod.* ix. 27, 28. *I have ſinned this time* —— and ſo likewiſe *Chap.* x. 16, 17. That thoſe after-judgments were alſo intended of God for the emendation of this obſtinate King is I think

think as clear from the expoſtulation of *Moſes* and *Aaron* with him, *Exod.* x. 3. *How long wilt thou refuſe to humble thy ſelf? Let my people go* —— which plainly ſuppoſes, both that the deſignation of the Judgment was to humble him; and that there was a poſſibility ſtill of reducing him to that pliable and ſequacious temper. And if it were otherwiſe, theſe and the like menaces and threatnings [*If thou refuſe to let my people go, I will do thus and thus unto thee*] would be wholly ſupervacaneous and ineffectual: Nay they would argue an unworthy exprobration in God of his obſtinate detention of the people, and refuſal to ſubmit to his will, when he had not ſtrength and power ſufficient to attempt the contrary.

2. It may well be doubted, Whether that Divine Goodneſs which is alwayes ready to breath upon the leaſt ſpark of the life of God in every rational Being; and aſſiſts every good motion and forwardneſs towards the formation of Gods holy image in every man, would not likewiſe have been as urgent and efficacious in *Pharaoh*, for the mollifying his obdurate ſpirit before he was taken out of the world, had he rightly and duly managed thoſe heavy punishments in order to his melioration,

i. e. if he would have complyed with the will of God. The sum of all therefore seems to be this, That Almighty God the ever-wise and benign Creator of all things, being conscious to all the affections, intrigues and hidden recesses of the spirit of Man, only knows how and when to apply a soveraign remedy; and like a skilful Chirurgion proportions his medicaments to the nature and quality of the wound, and seldom makes use of those more ungentle wayes of cauterizing and excision, till necessity and the preservation of the whole urge him to it. And even in this singular instance of *Pharaoh*, we may trace the footsteps of Gods benignity and love, as that Holy and Pious Father excellently well observes, Φανερώτερον μὲν ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τοῦ λαοῦ, διὰ πλειόνων παραδόξων πιστοποιομένου· καὶ δεύτερον τῶν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, ὅσοι ἔμελλον τὰ γινόμενα καταπληττόμενοι ἀκολουθεῖν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις. Ἐπίμικτος γὰρ, φησὶ, λαὸς πολὺς τῶν Αἰγυπτίων συνεξῆλθεν αὐτοῖς. Ἀπορρητότερον δὲ καὶ βαθύτερον τάχα, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ὄρελος γενέσθαι αὐτῷ τῷ Φαραὼ, οὐκ ἔτι ἀποκρύπτοντι τὴν ἰὸν, οὐδὲ τὴν ἕξιν συνέχοντι, καὶ τάχα διὰ τοῦ πράττειν ἐκλύοντι· ἵνα πάντα τὰ τῆς ἐνυπαρχούσης κακίας ἐκβράσματα ἐπιτελέσας, ἄπονον ὕστερον ἔχῃ τὸ τῶν κακῶν ὀιστικὸν δένδρον· καὶ τάχα ξηραινόμενον ἐπὶ τέλει, ὅτε καταποντοῦται, οὐχ ὡς ὀιηθείη ἄν τις, ἐπὶ τῷ παντελῶς ἀπολέσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ ἀποβαλλόντα τὰ ἁμαρτήματα κουφισθῆναι· καὶ τάχα

Origen. Philocal. cap. 27.

ἐν

ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἀπὸ τοῦτου πολέμου τῆς ψυχῆς εἰς ᾅδου καταβῆναι. Wherefore we may well interpret this *hardning* which is attributed to God, to consist not in any positive act, nor yet in the total subtraction of his grace: but to be an accidental effect of his kindness and mercy toward *Pharaoh*, in removing that sharp and uneasie though salutary discipline, which being not carefully and rightly made use of, became an occasion of a greater hardness and obduracy; *As*, saith the Father in the same Chapter, *when a Master forbears to punish a wicked servant*, he sayes, Ἐγώ σε ἀπώλεσα, καὶ ἐγώ σε πονηρὸν ἐποίησα, *I have spoiled you, and I have made you wicked*, οὕτω τὰ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀγαθότητος τοῦ Θεοῦ, πρόφασις γενόμενα τῆς σκληρότητος τοῦ Φαραώ, ἐσκληρύκεναι ἀναγέγραπται τὴν καρδίαν Φαραώ, i. e. *In like manner those things which proceed from Gods benignity and goodness, as if they had been the cause of* Pharaoh's *obduracy, are said to harden his heart.* And the Philosopher spake true when he said, τὸ ἀδικοῦντα μὴ διδόναι δίκην, πάντων μέγιστόν τε καὶ πρῶτον κακῶν ἐστι· *That it is the greatest evil that possibly can befal a Criminal, to be suffered to continue unpunished in wickedness.*

Verse 22. τὸ ἐνδείξασθαι ὀργὴν] *To shew his displeasure, i. e.* The effect of his displea-

ſure, to puniſh by a notable and exemplary way, as he did *Pharaoh*; ſo the word is uſed *Luke* xxi. 23. — *For there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land,* ἡ ὀργὴ ἐν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ, *i. e.* Puniſhment and Judgment the effect of Wrath upon this people. So likewiſe *Rom.* iii. 5. *Is God unrighteous,* ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν, *who puniſheth or taketh vengeance?* So that this is far from what *Beza* and other *Supralapſarians* would inferr, as if this Demonſtration of his anger were the prime and ultimate end which God propoſed in the eternal Reprobation of Men. For what can we imagine more inconſiſtent and unſutable with the Divine Nature, then to be eternally angry with the innocent and undeſerving? And what more contradicts the gracious Revelation of God, whereby he declares himſelf propenſe to Mercy, and ſlow to Anger againſt impenitent ſinners, then this which makes him equally diſpleaſed with the guiltleſs and criminal?

ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ, *i. e.* Suffered with much patience and longanimity, puniſhing them not ſo oft, nor when he might juſtly do it: but letting them take as it were the reins into their own hands, and break through all the fences and hedges whereby the Divine Goodneſs ſought to reſtrain

reſtrain them, into exorbitancy and impiety; and ſo render themſelves more uncapable of a mild and gentle Oeconomy. This being the genuine ſenſe, we can in no wiſe approve of their extravagant conjecture, who take to themſelves the liberty which they thankleſsly give to God, of making their wills and fancies the rule of their interpretations and actions, that this πολλὴ μακροθυμία, is only a bare ἀνοχὴ or forbearance of puniſhment complicated and conjoyned with a peremptory purpoſe of eternally excruciating and damning thoſe who were deſigned to deſtruction. For doubtleſs this longanimity of God contains and runs upon the ſuppoſal of antecedent Exhortations, Threatnings and Promiſes, as ſo many gracious methods to reduce men to Repentance; which cannot without clear hypocriſie and diſſimulation be affirmed of Reprobates in the *Supralapſarian* ſenſe.

σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, *Veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction*] Here the *Supralapſarians* endeavour to render κατηρτίσθης by *Creari* *, whereby they would obtrude that God creates men *veſſels of wrath* on purpoſe to deſtroy them, without any conſideration had to any qualifications whatever; which being a Doctrine

* *Vide Bezæ in hunc locum.*

ſo abſurd and unbecoming the Majeſty of an Al-wiſe and good God, it will be confutation enough to any rational perſon to rehearſe it. Σκεῦη κατηρτισμένα therefore is an Hebraiſme; for there being but few verbals in the Hebrew tongue, a Particle is uſed for a Verbal, and ſignifies no more then *fit* or *ready*, as *Luke* vi. 40. *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter*; κατηρτισμένος δὲ πᾶς, *but every one that is perfect, ſhall be as his Maſter.* For the Hebrew נכון which ſignifies *fit*, and is uſually rendred by ἕτοιμος, comes from the Verb כון, which ſometimes is rendred by ἑτοιμάζω, and ſometimes by καταρτίζω, *Pſal.* lxviii. 10. & lxxiv. 16. & lxxxix. 38. *By veſſels of wrath*, then are meant men who by their own voluntary and heynous tranſgreſſions become ſo far liable to Gods judgment, that his wrath may without any appearance of injuſtice be poured on them, as veſſels fit for no other uſe; and the adaptation or fitting of them for a ſevere deſtruction, muſt be attributed to themſelves, and to the inflexibleneſs of their irreclaimable diſpoſitions. Thus men are ſaid in Scripture καταρτίζειν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς ἀπώλειαν, *to fit themſelves to deſtruction*, in the ſame ſenſe as they are ſaid *to wrong their own ſouls, and to love death*, Prov. viii. 36. *to judge themſelves unworthy of everlaſting life*,

life, Acts xiii. 46. *To reject* or render ineffectual *the Counſel of God againſt themſelves*, Luke vii. 30. Not that they do directly and principally intend any ſuch thing: but becauſe they commit and act thoſe things, which do either naturally, or by virtue of the Divine command, produce ſuch an event and conſequence. In like manner, on the contrary, Men are ſaid *to work out their Salvation*, Phil. ii. 12. *To ſave themſelves*, 1 Tim. iv. 16. *To ſave their own ſouls*, Luke ix. 24. becauſe they act and proſecute thoſe things which have an indiſputable tendency to ſuch a deſired end.

For a *Concluſion* of this whole Diſcourſe, I ſhall briefly examine theſe two following Illations and Deductions of the *Contra-Remonſtrants*, from the Doctrine of Abſolute and Irreſpective Decrees.

1. *That none can be a true believer or ſincere Chriſtian, who knows not when nor how he was regenerated and born again by the Spirit*; that is, (to ſpeak in their language) *who cannot tell when he felt the mighty and efficacious power of the Divine Spirit daſhing aſunder his ſtrong heart, and gathering up the broken ſhivers, and uniting them together, and changing them into*

a heart of flesh, and infusing new qualities into the will, and raising the whole man from death to life. See XI. and XII. Canons of the Dort. Synod, *De hominis corrupt. & conversione ad Deum.*

2. *That every man who by those evidences, genuine marks of True Believers prescribed in him, can collect himself to be such; that is, to be in a state of Grace and Salvation, may assuredly believe, that he shall to the last Period of his life, remain and continue a living member of the Catholick Church, and undoubtedly partake of everlasting bliss and glory.* Artic. IX. and X. of the *Dort* Synod. *De Perseverantia Sanctorum.*

Against the first of these I shall lay down these Conclusions:

1. That he is a true and sincere Believer, who hath to his utmost endeavours so mortified and subdued the body of sin, that he willingly harbours no vice, nor takes any complacency in the impure motions of the brutish life: but through a fixed belief in the Goodness of God displayed unto mankind through the Lord Christ, resolutely presses forward to higher measures and degrees of Christian perfection, and incessantly breaths after a fuller participation of the Divine Nature. Such a

man

man I look upon to be truly regenerate and born anew of the Spirit of God, and to be affected, according to his proportion, as Chriſt himſelf was affected, when he dwelt on earth, and converſed with men. And though this Divine life, diſpread and manifeſt it ſelf by ſucceſſive acts, and ſhine not ſo full and bright as when it is near it's Center: yet it is as truly a God-like Nature, as an Infant is a Man, though he be not ſo in growth and ſtature. It is nothing but our ſelfwill which ſtands out againſt heaven, and keeps ſuch an impregnable fort againſt the grace of God; and whoever is truly dead to it, and receives the gentle impreſſions of the Divine Spirit into his ſoul, and acts correſpondently to ſo holy a principle; he is certainly in the Land of Life and Truth, and partakes of that bleſſed Nature, which cannot reſt among the duſt and rubbiſh of this lower World: but ſeparates whatever is heterogeneous in the ſoul of man, and by perpetual and ſucceſsful attempts, reſtores again thoſe Divine forms which ſhone glorioufly in humane minds before their unfortunate receſſion and retrogradation from the lucid fountain of their everlaſting joy and happineſs.

2. The

2. The firſt actings of Grace in ſuch a Man as I have above deſcribed, are altogether undiſcernible and imperceptible, being nothing elſe but the preparatory Exertions of that Almighty Goodneſs, the Source and Father of all things, for the fitting and adapting Men to receive the Divine Image and Form of the Holy Jeſus, according to the words of the Lord Chriſt, *John* vi. 44. *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him:* and in this the Nature of Man is wholly paſſive; and the only thing pertaining to him is to ſee that he do not obſtruct and hinder the progreſs of that efficacious Love, by a cowardly ſubmiſſion to the importunate motions of iniquity and unhallowed actions. Now the effluxes and operations of this Vital Principle, are coeval with the firſt actings of Reaſon and diſcriminative Perception, and extend themſelves according to the dimenſions of the intellectual Powers: but no man is any more conſcious of it's energy, then of the growth of his bones; for ſo he that made the Nature of man and knows his frame, hath told us, *Luke* xvii. 20. *The Kingdom of God, cometh not with obſervation:* And *Mark* iv. 26, 27. *So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man ſhould caſt*

caſt ſeed into the ground, and ſhould ſleep, and riſe night and day, and the ſeed ſhould ſpring and grow up, he knoweth not how. And when men are *born again* ἐκ σπορᾶς ἀφθάρτου, *of that incorruptible ſeed*, ſown in their hearts by the Eternal Πατρὸς (as Chriſt calls his Father, *John* xv. 1.) it breaks through the clods and ſprings up, being cheriſhed by the dew of heaven, and the warmth of that immortal fire which paſſeth through the intellectual world, and melts and refines every lapſed Being from the contracted filth of material concretions; and no man can ſay, Lo here I was caught by the breath of God, or lo there was my reſurrection from the comfortleſs grave of ſin and death; For as *the wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.* But this I would have underſtood of the ordinary way of Gods diſpenſing his Grace, and not of that ſupernatural manner whereby he converted *Saul*, caſting him down to the Earth by a voice from heaven, nor of the diffuſion of the Spirit to the Heathens when firſt converted to the faith: For ſuch (as alſo notorious and groſs ſinners) may have ſome ſenſibility of Divine Vegetation, and

1 Pet. i. 23.

Joh. iii. 8.

appre-

apprehenſion of ſome external circumſtances attending the New-birth unto righteouſneſs. But for thoſe who are born and educated under Chriſtian Parents, our Church hath excellently well determined in the ſervice and office of Baptiſme, *That they are Regenerated and born again, not only of Water, but of the Spirit, by which their Natures are Sanctified*; as we read of the Prophet *Jeremy*, and *John the Baptiſt*, who *received the ſpirit of holineſs, and were hallowed from their Mothers wombs*; and for any man to enquire of ſuch, or for them curiouſly to ſearch after ſome preternatural ſtirrings and motions of the Divine Spirit in their ſouls, by which to diſcern the firſt dawnings of the grace of God upon them, is as impertinent as it would be to demand of them when firſt they heard or perceived the nutrition and augmentation of the parts of their Natural bodies.

3. The uſual way and method by which the firſt diſſeminators of the Goſpel implanted and begot the image of Chriſt in the minds of men was, by exhorting them in the firſt place, to the plain and obvious duties and exerciſes of Morality, ſuch as Juſtice and Equity, Temperance and Chaſtity, great love and compaſſion towards

wards all men, relieving and comforting the neceſſitous and calamitous according to their ſeveral wants and indigencies, and ſuch like acts of Virtue and Reaſon, which are the preparatory qualifications for the introducing the Divine Spirit to attempt the formation of the living Image of Jeſus Chriſt; and between theſe and the Divine life, there is the ſame cognation as between the blade and the full-ear'd corn. For it is utterly impoſſible to conceive the life of God without them, or to imagine that he can be really Baptiz'd into the life and ſpirit of Jeſus, who is unjuſt to his Neighbour, and unpitiful and contemptive of the compaſſionate needs and ſighs of his poor Brother. It is ſufficiently ſeen, and the ſad experience of every man will declare it to him, how deplorably Apoſtate our Natures are, when we firſt come into the World; and how vitiouſly inclined our ſouls when they begin to exert themſelves in acts of Reaſon and Intellect: ſo that they appear almoſt breathleſs and inactive to the concerns of Immortality, or whatever offers to better their condition, and pull them out of the mire and clay wherein their feet are held. And to think that God will forcibly draw them out, and hale them like unwilling captives into a ſtate to which they

they have no cognation or vital congruity awakened in them; beſide that it is derogatory to his ſpotleſs and pure Nature, it is likewiſe inconſiſtent with the nature of the thing it ſelf, conſidering mens minds ſo vitiated, and totally diſcompoſed by a long and aſſiduous inflexion and diſtortion to degenerate Vice. For Divine generations as well as Natural, require a ſutable proportionateneſs, and as every matter is not capable of conciliating and uniting with every formative principle: ſo neither is every temper of humane ſouls congruouſly diſpoſed for the inaction of that Divine Spirit, which never falls to work, but where the ſubject is rendred plyable and ſequacious by timely preparations and fit diſpoſitions and capacities. And if it were otherwiſe, that meer Power, or the Naked Preſence of the Divine Eſſence diſpreading it ſelf through the whole Creation, were ſufficient to give us any hopeful expectation of our Spiritual Regeneration by it, without any precedent aſſimilation or fitting diſpoſitions, I do not ſee how this boundleſs and compaſſionate Goodneſs can behold the World in ſo ſad and miſerable a plight, the whole Earth being filled with Violence, and the Habitations of cruelty and Oppreſſion,

and

and mens ſpirits ſo degenerated, that ſaving their outward ſhape, and a little more cunning and craft in contriving and executing ſelf-deſigns and intereſts, they are hardly diſtinguiſhable from the Beaſts of the field; I do not ſee (I ſay) how that Love, which is the inmoſt centre of the Deity, and from whence flow all the perfective irradiations of his bleſſed Nature, can behold the ſons of men ſo unlike himſelf, and yet not reform and change them, ſince the buſineſs lies wholly upon the exertion of his Almighty Power. But we finding no ſuch thing, we may confidently averr, that there are ſome precedaneous qualifications required to the perfection of the Divine birth, and theſe can be no other then Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, purity and abſtracted affections from Mundane forms, Chaſtity and moderation of bodily pleaſures, and a dear and tender regard of the whole Creation. Which things have ſo near an affinity with the Divine life, that the one neceſſarily inferres the preſence and exiſtence of the other, theſe requiſites being the baſis and foundation upon which the heavenly building is framed: now as in the ſtructure of the material Temple there was *neither ſound of ax nor hammer*; 1 King. vi. 7.

mer; in like manner that heavenly edifice which the Eternal Architect endeavours to erect in the ſoul of every man, is compleated and perfected without any ſound or noiſe, the Holy Jeſus neither crying nor lifting up his voice in the ſtreets, to give a ſign of his approach when he renews and forms his image in the ſons of men. For that image which God ſhapes out in our Natures, is not any thing different and diſtinct from our moral and inherent Righteouſneſs, or any new infuſed quality; but the exaltation and freeing of that principle which though weak and depreſſed by a load of corruption; yet being immortal and incorruptible, bears a Divine ſtamp, and exerts it ſelf in acts of Sobriety, Juſtice and Goodneſs, and being aſſiſted and corroborated by the powerful conduct of the Spirit of God, ſucceſſively diſplayes it ſelf, and continually ariſes to greater meaſures, till the living efformation of Chriſt be perfectly compleated. An inſtance of this we have in *Cornelius*, *Acts* x. and the more devout and religious Heathens, in whom the life of God was in a good meaſure radicated, and diſcovered it ſelf in his frequent Prayers and Charitable actions; who when he was renewed and

ſanctified

ſanctified by the gracious illapſe and deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, was not deveſted of thoſe Moral accompliſhments of his Nature, or endued with any thing different from them; but his Righteouſneſs and perfections of his mind were increaſed and ſublimated, and fitted for the relliſhing ſuch delicate and tender impreſſions: which things being ſeriouſly conſidered, it cannot be that any one ſhould perceive the beginning, or determine the time of the vegetation and increaſe of the Divine Image and Nature.

2. The ſecond illation which concludes the infallible certainty of his Perſeverance who is once in a ſtate of Grace, and collects himſelf to be under the immutable decree of life by thoſe Characteriſticks delivered from the mouth of no mean Dictator of that pleaſing Doctrine; as it is deſtructive of Piety and caſts a malevolent aſpect upon true Religion and Virtue: ſo it hath not the leaſt print or footſtep in the Holy Scriptures, nor can alledge any thing but fancy and the prejudice of impotent affections to maintain it's credit in the world, as will appear from theſe ſubſequent Propoſitions.

1. That the Decrees of God, whether of life or death, look upon men according to the exigency and import of their preſent ſtates and conditions, not of their potential or future Beings. As ſuppoſe God foreſee and diſcern, that this man righteous at preſent, will hereafter forſake his righteouſneſs, and apoſtatize from the holy Commandement and do wickedly; yet ſo long as he continues righteous, he is under the favourable eye of Heaven, and is treated as one whoſe name is written in the Book of Life. *Whoſoever doth righteouſneſs, is righteous: but he that committeth ſin, is of the Devil* —— 1 Joh. iii. 7, 8. And more plainly yet, *The righteouſneſs of the righteous, ſhall not deliver him in the day of his tranſgreſſion: as for the wickedneſs of the wicked, he ſhall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedneſs* —— Ezek. xxxiii. 12, 13, 14, 15. The reſult of theſe places is this, That particular men, or the perſons of men, from time to time, come under the Eternal Decrees of Love or Hatred, according to their actual and preſent ſtate of righteouſneſs or unrighteouſneſs. For if God decreed life and death upon the conſideration of future ſin and holineſs, he may as well decree a reward and puniſhment reſpectively

ſpectively for that which men would have been engaged in, had they lived in this World to all eternity; which directly contradicts that Scripture wherein we are ſaid to give an account for the things which we have already done, not which we ſhould have done, had we continued longer in the body. And hence it is that the righteous man, who is now in the love and favour of God, being hardned again through his own negligence and the deceitfulneſs of ſin, may relapſe into that ſtate, which the Decree of death takes hold of: and of ſuch a man is that of St. *Peter* to be underſtood, 2 *Peter* ii. 21. *It had been better for ſuch a man not to have known the way of righteouſneſs; then after he hath known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to him.* And when the righteous man degenerates from his former faith, and the enemy takes advantage and oppreſſes the Divine life through his careleſſneſs and folly, God charges all his paſt ſins upon him, and recals his juſtification whereby he was before eſteemed as righteous in his ſight; which is intimated in the Parable *Matth.* xviii. where he that had the debt forgiven him, becauſe he dealt ſo harſhly and ungently with his Fellow-ſervant, was again

called in queſtion, and the whole ſumme charged upon him; and Chriſt applies it to our preſent purpoſe, *verſe* 35. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his Brother their treſpaſſes.* For we muſt know that God pardons our iniquities by parts; and as we grow in Virtue and Holineſs, ſo his diſpleaſure decreaſes and is taken off, and he that is *juſtified becomes yet more juſtified*, and walks in the light, and the breath of God enkindles the heavenly fire, and fans it into flames and ardors, and ſo long the man is ſafe: but if he return to folly, the anger of God is renewed as at the beginning, and the *laſt ſtate of that man is worſe then the firſt.*

2. That true and real Believers may relapſe, and be confined and brought in bondage to the ſtrait and narrow laws of their own ſelf-wills, and fall from the life of God, and become ſettled and radicated in a life of ſelf-ſeeking, and guided by the parſimonious principles of Pleaſure and Intereſt, is the voice of Scripture and Reaſon; the former of which palpably and undeniably concludes and determines the caſe; *Heb.* x. 38, 39. *Now the juſt ſhall live by faith*; ὁ δὲ ὑποστείληται, *but if he* (not *any man*, as our Tranſlation improperly ſupplies

plies it) *i. e.* δίκαιος, *the juſt man*, who before is ſaid, *to live by his faith; if he draw back, Gods ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him:* and what this drawing back is, we may collect from the ſubſequent words, *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition* —— So again, *Heb.* vi. 4, 5, 6. *For it is impoſſible* (*i. e.* very difficult and hard) *for the* ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας, *thoſe who were once enlightned* (*i.e.* Baptized; for Baptiſm was called by the Ancients φώτισμα, *illumination*) *and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good word of God, and the Powers of the world to come; if if they ſhall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, ſeeing they crucifie to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame.* And if this were to be underſtood of Hypocrites, what need the expreſſion of πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν? For unto what ſhould they be renewed and reinſtated, their former condition being in it ſelf ſo deep an unregeneracy? and from what is it they do παραπίπτειν, *fall away*, when their diſtempered natures were never recovered by the practice of any real and ſubſtantial holineſs? Wherefore this muſt neceſſarily be meant of thoſe who had in a good meaſure ſubdued the motions of the

inferior life, and left τὴν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ χριστοῦ λόγου, the principles and rudiments of Chriſtianity, and were ariſing ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα, to perfection. For *the taſting the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come*, are no more to be underſtood of a ſlight touch and tranſient perception, then the ſame phraſe when it is uſed of the Lord Chriſt, that he *taſted death for every man*, Chap. ii. 9. But that as he did really feel and experience the effects of death conquering his mortal life; ſo theſe here ſpoken of, did truly reliſh and apprehend the ſweetneſs of Chriſtianity from a clear diſcriminating ſenſe of it's native excellency, and felt the Divine Spirit deſtroying the irregular appetites of the inferior life, and ſanctifying their Natures by a bleſſed inhabitation. To theſe we may add, *Ezek.* xviii. 24. *But when the righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, ſhall he live? All his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned* ——— What can be more manifeſt than this, if men would clear up their apprehenſions and look upon things as things, and not content themſelves with bare names and ſhadows? For that the

righteous

righteous man in the Text, ſhould ſignifie an Hypocrite, and one ſeemingly righteous, is the moſt diſtorted gloſs that can be put upon it:

1. Becauſe the *righteous* is here oppoſed to the *wicked perſon*: but if it were to be expounded of one ſeemingly righteous, who is ſo much worſe then an open profane perſon, in that he acts impiety under the cover of Religion, the words muſt run thus, *When the righteous man (i. e.* the Hypocrite) *turns away from his Hypocriſie, and acts according to the abominations of the wicked man:* and if by the [*righteous*] be meant an *Hypocrite*, what is to be underſtood by the [*wicked*] to which 'tis oppoſed?

2. This righteous man, is ſaid *to live by his righteouſneſs*: but the Scripture no where ſayes, *That the Hypocrite ſhall live by his counterfeit holineſs*; but directly the contrary, *The hope of the Hypocrite ſhall periſh*. And I muſt confeſs, I do not at all underſtand the intent and purpoſe of God in inſerting ſo many Cautions and Exhortations to Watchfulneſs and Diligence in the Goſpel, if there be no poſſibility of a true Believer's deſertion of the Faith; which queſtionleſs the Illuſtrious Compilers of the Church of *England*'s Confeſſi-

on of Faith had an eye to, when in *Artic.* xvi. they expreſs themſelves thus, *After we have received the Holy Ghoſt, we may depart from the grace given to us, and fall into ſin:* and this is the dictate of Reaſon; for Habits as they are acquired by aſſiduous and repeated acts, ſo they may likewiſe be loſt by inobſervance and negligence, according to that of the Poet:

Neglecta urenda ſilex innaſcitur agris.

For the ſoul of man being a perpetual motion and activity, will be alwayes catching at ſomething, and if once it cool and flag in the wayes of Righteouſneſs, will undoubtedly be wrought off, and ſpend it's ſtrength and powers in the ſervice of that other principle, which being not wholly mortified, will certainly revive and confirm it's hold, when the Counſels and Inſpirations of the Divine life are in any meaſure rejected, and it left free to regain the Dominion from whence it was moſt juſtly, by the powerful and efficacious influence of Gods grace, detruded. And he that ſhall further conſider that long and confirmed degeneracy the ſoul lay under, before a new and Divine principle began to act in it, and how agreeable the ob-

jects

jects and impreſſions of ſenſe are to be our preſent ſtate, and how eligible by us, will perceive that the Nature of Man may oft be overcome, and the Divine life driven from it's rightful throne, till by a ſharp and perſevering contention it be throughly ſettled and radicated in a quiet peace and tranquillity by putting all it's enemies under it's feet.

But for a more clear inſpection into this Doctrine of *Perſeverance*, we muſt recurr to what was ſaid above *Chap.* V. concerning the *Liberty of Mans Will*, and conſider all true and ſincere Believers under a threefold ſtate; for the Divine life ariſes gradually, and increaſes in due meaſures and proportions, till it arrive to a full and compleat perfection, and inveſt the ſoul of man with immortality and glory.

1. The Scripture ſpeaks of the νηπιοι, *Infants*, and ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη, *New-born babes*, who are fed with the Milk of the Word, with the plain Doctrines and Principles of Chriſtianity, their *Criterion* being not yet purged enough to have a true ſenſe and relliſh of ſtronger meat, and the more ſublime and Myſterious part of Chriſtianity: And theſe are thoſe *Lambs* which the Lord Chriſt the great Shep-

Shepherd, when he was leaving the World, ſo affectionately bequeathed to the care and conduct of St. *Peter*, redoubling his requeſt in thoſe paſſionate terms, *Feed my Lambs*. And this is the ſenſe of that Myſtical Prophecy denoting the compaſſionate care of Chriſt, *Gathering the Lambs with his arme, and carrying them in his boſom, and gently leading thoſe that are with young*, who are pregnant with the Divine form and Image of the Holy Jeſus. From this infant-ſtate of Grace the deſcent is eaſie, by reaſon of the ſtrength and powerfulneſs of the adverſe principle, which hath taken ſo firm and deep a radication, and watches all opportunities to propagate and diſpread it's infectious Nature; that the man is perpetually within the confines of danger, till by ſtrong and continued habits of Virtue, he have totally mortified and extirpated every luſt, paſſion and inordinate deſire which hinders and obſtructs his paſſage to that quiet and ſerene ſtate, where all things are plain, eaſie and delightſome: Hence is that admonition of St. *Paul* to

1 *Epiſt.* *Timothy*, that he ſuffer not ὁ νεόφυτον, a
c. iii. v. 6. *Novice*, one newly converted and brought into the faith of Chriſt, to take upon him the office of a Biſhop; becauſe that ſtate

of

of Grace is ſubject to infinite hazards and dangers by reaſon of the potenr oppoſition of the contrary life, and the prevalency of the Corporeal Nature, which till it be perfectly ſubdued, will alwayes breath a fuliginous ſteam, and more or leſs obnubilate Reaſon, the eye and guide of the ſoul.

2. There are νεανίσκοι, *young men which have overcome the wicked one*, and which have in a great meaſure brought low and weakned the power of the unrighteous Nature; ſuch who are τέλειοι, *perfect men*, and through a faithful and conſtant exerciſe and uninterrupted habit of Holineſs, have a true diſcriminating ſenſe of good and evil, and have purified and ſublimated their intellectual powers, by an aſſiduous mortification and eradication of every perverſe deſire and motion of the inferior life. To theſe well-grown Chriſtians true Religion diſplayes it ſelf, and appears in it's native beauty and excellency, and they embrace it with delight and joy; and looking beyond the Horizon of time and change, behold nothing but a bright and never-ceaſing day: and this fills them with a peaceful conſolation, that the juſt Judge of Heaven and Earth will not fail to crown his own life with that glory

glory and felicity which he himſelf partakes of in the higheſt heavens. But though this ſtate be ſo glorious and lovely; yet it is not wholly out of the reach of danger, but needs often admonitions, and great diligence, accompanied with frequent acts of Devotion, which may fan and kindle the heavenly fire, leſt the dying and periſhing principle of the contrary life revive and get the upper hand. This degree of grace, although it be able to overcome many and great difficulties, and defeat the latent ſtratagems of powerful enemies; yet it is ſometimes, though not ſo eaſily or frequently as the former, captivated by the undiſcerned force of Pride or Hypocriſie or ſome other refined ſin. For it may ſo happen, that a good man, who cannot be drawn to the commiſſion or acting of a groſs impiety by any temptations in the world; yet may fall through the prevalency of an intellectual Vice, and court the ſhadow and fantaſtick image of ſin, and yet never deſcend into the brutiſh and ferine life of action.

3. There are πατέρες, *Fathers*, who are arrived to the higheſt perfection the nature of Man is capable of in this life, and theſe a *Platoniſt* would call *Heroically Good*, although this Divine frame and God-like temper

temper be infinitely more precious and tranſcendent, then the higheſt reach and comprehenſion of pure *Platoniſme*, and not attainable by the exerciſe τῶν ἀρετῶν παραδειγματικῶν, of Paradigmatical Virtues, which wholly extirpated the firſt motions of ſin, and did in their ſenſe θεοποιεῖν, Deifie a man, and transform them into Intellect, and place him out of the noiſe and perturbations of the inferior life, in a quiet and ſerene contemplation of the firſt and ever-bleſſed Author of all things. Here the whole will and deſires are ſo farr conformable and reſigned to the Will of God, as the ordinary courſe of things and the earthly ſtate will permit, and the Man is perfectly dead to himſelf, and to every relliſh of bodily motions, and the life of God triumphantly ſeated in the mind, from whence it rules, and governs every thought, word and action with unſpeakable eaſe and pleaſure, and repleniſhes the ſoul with a confident and ſtedfaſt belief of her future happineſs and immortality; and though for the preſent ſhe be cloth'd and entomb'd in an earthly body, yet is ſhe wholly and perfectly Divine, bearing about with her the regenerated characters and impreſſes of the bleſſed Image of the Son of God, an indiſſoluble union with whom ſhe inceſſantly breaths

breaths after, and being thus Θεὸς θνητὸς, *a mortal God*, ſhe is no ſooner diſengag'd and ſet free by the Divine Providence from the weight and burden of terreſtrial encumbrance: but ſhe paſſes ſecure through the caliginous fumes of this lower world, into the flowry tracts of bliſs and glory. And from this ſtate there is only left a poſſibility of lapſing, the Divine Life being ſo fully and compleatly ſettled, and repoſſeſſed of it's ancient throne, that it will, maugre all the oppoſition of the Powers of darkneſs, undoubtedly inſtate the ſoul in all that happineſs God made her for.

Some

Some

REFLECTIONS

On a late Diſcourſe of

Mr. *PARKERS*,

Concerning

The Divine Dominion and Goodneſs.

I Should now have concluded this Diſcourſe; but that I thought my ſelf obliged to take notice of ſome Poſitions of this Ingenious Author, which ſeem to interfere and claſh with what I have written. In purſuance of which, I ſhall lay down theſe ſubſequent *Axiomes*, or *Moral Truths*, which will need no Probation, but appear full of their own natural Light and Evidence to any ſober and unprejudic'd mind; and by them I ſhal examine the main things contained in his Diſcourſe.

Axiome

Axiome I.

That there is ſomething immutably and Eternally Good.

WHat I mean by *Moral Good* and *Evil*, I have declared elſewhere; and therefore ſhall only in brief add, That Moral Goodneſs is nothing but an agreeableneſs, harmony or convenience; ſo that things are then Morally Good, when they correſpond and unite with the inward ſenſe of our ſouls, that is, with our Intellectual or Rational Natures: which congruity when we feel in our ſelves we call thoſe things good. And whatever is really and truly Good, is immutably and eternally ſo, not made ſo by any poſitive ſanction or command: but the reſult of Gods own Moral Being, which he can no more ſwarve from, then deſtroy himſelf. This is called *an Eternal Law*, and is nothing but *Right Reaſon*; whence God being the higheſt Reaſon, he is called by *Ariſtotle, de Mundo, Cap. 6.* Νόμος ἀϊδιος καὶ ἰσοκλινὴς· And *Tully, Phil.* 1. ſayes, *Lex nihil aliud eſt quam recta & à numine Deorum ratio, imperans honeſta, prohibenſque contraria.* And by this there is an affinity between God

God and all his Intellectual productions, foraſmuch as Right Reaſon is the ſame in us as in him, (and *Tully* intimates *Lib.* 1. *de legibus*) it is that Eternal Law which is common to Gods and Men, and begets the ſimilitude between God and them: *Quid eſt enim, non dicam in homine, ſed in omni cælo atque terra, Ratione divinius? quæ cùm adolevit atque perfecta eſt, nominatur ritè Sapientia. Eſt igitur (quoniam nihil eſt ratione melius, eáque eſt in homine & in Deo) prima homini cum Deo Rationis ſocietas. Quæ cùm ſit lex, lege quoque conſociati homines cum Diis putandi ſumus.* This harmony therefore and agreeableneſs of Moral Objects to our Intellectual parts, is antecedent to the things themſelves, ſo that they are not good becauſe God for example commands them, but therefore they are injoyned, becauſe there is an innate Goodneſs in them. As, that a Triangle hath three Angles I learn indeed from ſenſe, but more perfectly from that innate *Idea* which I have in my own mind, which would certainly have concluded ſo; though it had never been the object of my ſenſes.

Axiome II.

That of that which is good, one is better then another.

THis is evident from the difference and gradual declenſion of lives from the firſt root and center of all Beings. There is no life ſo languid and unactive, but ought to be reckoned among thoſe things that are good; becauſe Being ſimply conſidered, is better and more deſirable then not Being, although the more noble any Being is, ſo much the better it is accounted. And as there is this difference in reſpect of Beings themſelves; ſo likewiſe in reference to their felicity, both in regard of it's magnitude and duration: Thus the felicity of men is better then that of Brute Animals: for the Happineſs of any creature conſiſts in the free enjoyment and exerciſe of it's natural faculties and endowments, and the larger and more comprehenſive the the faculties and capacities of any Being are, the greater is it's felicity. As to duration, that a longer is better than a ſhorter Duration, it is ſo palpable that it needs no further mentioning. And this rule holds good in Moral qualities and affections:

Power

Power it ſelf is a Perfection; though as to it's exerciſe, it be indifferent either to Good or Evill: but Wiſedome is more excellent then Power, foraſmuch as it is able to direct, guide and ſteer the reſults of Power; otherwiſe Wiſdom and Knowledge would include no more perfection, then the force of a Thunderbolt, or the furious agitation of a whirlwind. And Goodneſs is more excellent and pretious then Wiſdom, for Wiſdom without Goodneſs degenerates into Craft and Subtlety: Moreover, the properties and effects of Goodneſs are more diffuſive and deſirable then Knowledge, and more perfective of the ſubject they reſide in.

Axiome III.

That the beſt or higheſt Quality, Mode, or Attribute in any Being, will obtain the firſt place in operation.

FRom hence it came to paſs, that the *Platoniſts* conſidering Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power, as diſtinct qualities in created Beings, and diſcerning ſo great an inequality between them, they grew confident they would likewiſe retain their Eſſential differences when exalted into Sub-

ſtantial life; and therefore the Supreme Deity, the firſt root and fountain of all things, they call τ'αγαθόν, the ſecond δημιυργόν, and the laſt τὴν τῶ κόσμυ ψυχὴν, each one abating ſomething of the perfection of the firſt, ἄχει γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴς τὴν θεότητα προελθεῖν· λοιπὸν ὃ τὸ ἄθεον ἀπὸ τ σωματικῆς ἐνῆρχθαι διαφορᾶς. But we need not aſcend ſo high for the Explication of this *Axiome*, for if we do but look into our ſelves we may plainly diſcern the Truth of it. All the Powers of any Being are not alike, ſome are more capacious and lively, others ſteril, narrow and contracted; but that faculty which is the moſt pretious and Soveraign, hath alwayes the firſt and chiefeſt place in acting. Man (as *Ariſtotle* obſerves) conſiſts of a double Nature, according to which his whole life is governed and framed, Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσει συνέστηκεν ἐξ ἀρχοντος καὶ ἀρχομένυ. The τὸ ἄρχον, he calls that which the *Stoicks* expreſs by τὸ κυριεῦον, and τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, the Soveraign and Imperatorial Powers of the Soul, and the τὸ ἀρχόμενον, is the ſame with the τὸ θηριῶδες καὶ τὸ λειποψυχῶδες, the ſerine and brutiſh part, with the *Platoniſts*. Now the Ruling part being more Noble and better, then that part which was made to be ſubject and to obey; hence it comes to paſs, that in the true and natural

Cyril. lib. 8. adverſ. Julian.

Mora'. Endem. l. 7. c. 15.

tural ſtate of the Soul, the τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, obtains the chief place in operation, although poſſibly there may be ſomething in mans ſoul more pretious then Reaſon, and is indeed τὸ ἄνθος, the flower and ſummity of the mind, which we may term τὸ ἀγαθοειδὲς τῆς ψυχῆς, that faculty of the ſoul which perceives the relliſh, ſavour and goodneſs of Virtue, and naturally embraces and joyes in that which Right Reaſon approves as Good. For as there is a kind of ſenſe in the lower or *Plaſtick Powers* of the Soul, whereby they diſlike ungrateful and unſutable objects, even when our will and perception has nothing to do in it: ſo there is ſomething in us that exults and triumphs, and naturally joyns it ſelf with infinite ſatisfaction and delight, when our Intellect and Reaſon only give a judgement of the Eſſence and Truth of moral objects.

Axiome IV.

That what is beſt in any Being, is the Rule and meaſure of all other qualities.

HEnce Man having a double life within him, *Intellectual* and *Animal*, which the Sacred Writings call *Fleſh and Spirit*; and both theſe having different inclinations and objects, the higher life ought to controul the lower, and reduce all it's appetites and motions to a conformity to it's ſeverer Dictates and Preſcriptions; which in a moral ſenſe is the meaning of Mans having *Dominion over the Fowls of the Air, and Fiſh of the Sea.* In like manner, Will, and Power, and Soveraignty, are all reſolved into Goodneſs; and if at any time they are exerciſed without it, they looſe their Natures, and degenerate into ſelfiſhneſs and Tyranny. And it is abſolutely neceſſary that the Beſt, ſhould be the meaſure of all other faculties and modes in us; becauſe our chief happineſs conſiſting in our conjunction with the moſt Abſolute and Perfect Good, and that which is Beſt in us uniting with it

it, it will infallibly follow, that that which is the moſt Divine in us, ſhould command and rule all other Faculties whatever. And this holds good in the Moral Eſſence of God, for Goodneſs being more pretious and ſoveraign then any other Attribute, it muſt needs be by the foregoing *Axiome*, the meaſure of all the reſt.

Axiome V.

That Being is no longer Eligible, then it is tolerably happy.

THat a Miſery or Calamity exceeding the happineſs of our Beings, is worſe then not Being, is plain at firſt ſight; for bare Exiſtence, though it be a term of Perfection: yet when it is charged with a ſurpluſage of miſery above the benefit that accrues by it, it deſtroyes the Reaſons of Being, which are chiefly the conveniences and opportunities of acting according to the proper faculties of any Being. And common experience ſhews us how unable and unfit we are for the exerciſe of any functions of life, when a ſharp and acute pain ſeazes on us; and if this do-

lorous ſenſe be fierce, vehement and durable, it is a queſtion, Whether it will not perfectly extinguiſh all Vital congruity, and reduce us to a condition altogether the ſame with Non-Entity? For to be, and not to be conſcious of, and perceive our own Beings, are one and the ſame thing. And he that well conſiders this, will not be apt to pain and excruciate any Being, howſoever vile and contemptible, unleſs upon good Reaſons and Cauſes. For certainly though in a moral ſenſe we may piouſly ſay, That all things were made for man; yet to ſay, There is no other Phyſical Reaſon of their Beings, is too bold and preſumptuous an Aſſertion, they being (ſo many I mean as are capable of ſenſe) endued with faculties in whoſe uſe they enjoy and ſolace themſelves.

Axiome

Axiome V I.

A preſent Evil that brings with it a Good greater then what that Evil deprived us of, is to be looked upon as Good.

THus an untimely death is to be accounted an Evil in it ſelf, but yet ought to be looked upon as Good by him who is thereby raiſed to the participation of a higher and more exalted life. This Conſideration made *Socrates* ſay, *That Death would indeed be hard and ſharp to him,* ὁ μὲν μὴ ἄμεινον ἔχειν, πρῶτον μὲν παρὰ τὰς θεὰς ἄλλως σοφός τε καὶ ἀγαθὰς, ἔπειτα καὶ παρὰ ἀνθρώπους τετελοπκότας ἀμείνους οὗ ἐνθάδε. Such are all the Afflictions that befal a man in this World, Evil for the preſent, foraſmuch as they are accompanied with trouble and pain; but yet are to be eſteemed Good, becauſe they teach us the lubricity of all mundane joyes, and inflame our Love of Virtue, and fix our deſires upon an immortal Good, which amidſt all the uncertain revolutions of this Region of death and miſery, will never leave us, but conduct us to the bleſſed manſions of life and peace. The conſtant belief of this drew that Generous and

Epict. Enchirid. c. 79. and Noble speech from *Socrates*, Ἐι ταύτῃ τοῖς θεοῖς φίλον, ταυτῃ γενέσθω· Ἐμὲ δὲ Ἄνυτος καὶ Μέλιτος ἀποκτεῖναι μὲν δύνανται, βλάψαι δὲ οὔ.

Having laid down these Moral Principles, which are nothing but the plain and genuine productions of Right Reason, I shall now examine the Authors Discourse by them, and shew wherein his Arguments are weak and inconclusive in reference to his main design.

The first thing therefore that I shall take notice of is, his stating the true ground and foundation of Gods Sovereignty and Dominion over man, *page* 20, 21, *&c.* which he does by Arbitrating the Dispute between the *Arminians* and *Calvinists*; the one assert, *That it bottoms upon the Benefit of Creation*; and the other *ground it upon the unlimitedness of Gods Power*. The first of these (he sayes) *are evidently mistaken, because God was from all eternity invested with a Power of doing any thing that was not misbecoming his Divine Perfections* —— *but God being alwayes Infinitely Perfect, could not acquire any new Excellence from the Worlds Creation, and therefore the Collation of Benefits cannot beget any new Power in him; because the Power which he had antecedently*

antecedently to all his benefits, was not capable of being made greater ———

To which I Reply,

1. That Dominion and Power, as it ſignifies Sovereignty, are Relative terms, and therefore if we could ſuppoſe or imagine any time wherein there were no Creatures in Being, Dominion would then be improperly attributed to God; becauſe if he had Dominion, there muſt be ſome Subjects exiſtent of his Dominion: and therefore though God by creating the World, acquired no new Excellence or Perfection; yet he had ſome new Mode or Qualification which he had not before: as that he was the Father of the Intellectual, and Maker of the Corporeal World; which would be improper terms before he had brought any thing into Being. Thus although God know, and have as it were a perfect Scheme of all future things poſſible to be known; yet his conception or knowledge of the ſame thing when future and poſſible, and actually exiſtent, is not the ſame; for when it is actually brought into Being, he acquires a new manner of knowledge of it; for it is impoſſible that the conception of futurity and actual Exiſtence ſhould be the ſame. Therefore I ſay,

I ſay, though the Creation of an Intellectual Being, do not formally beget any new Power in God, which was not antecedently in him; yet it begets a new mode and qualification of his Power, whereby the Creature may juſtly expect to be dealt withal according to the Nature and capacities, which that Infinite Power placed in it.

2. The Collation of Benefits, inveſts the Creatures with a Right or Priviledge of juſtly hoping for all ſuch fair and equitable dealings from God, as ſhall beſt ſute with thoſe faculties he endued them withal. For Gods very Donation of Being to the Creatures, is as it were, a ſilent contract or promiſe, That his whole Oeconomy towards them, ſhall be equal and righteous, and that he will never take from them any the leaſt degree of that felicity and beatitude he was graciouſly pleaſed to conferr upon them at the firſt moment of their Exiſtence without their own ſin and fault.

Upon theſe grounds our Author might with greater plauſibility of Reaſon, have founded *Gods Dominion* upon the *Right of Creation*, then upon *Gods abſolute and unlimited Power*, which he confeſſes *page* 24. to *be bounded by an internal Principle of Good-*

Goodneſs, which may be ſaid to tye and reſtrain God not to do any thing repugnant to this Principle of Goodneſs. So that if the exerciſe of Power be limited and confined by this pretious Attribute of Goodneſs, this were a more ſure ground of Gods Dominion over the Creatures in my apprehenſion, then that which he hath pitched upon, as will appear from *Axiome* III. And to ſay, that the Reaſon why God cannot do any thing repugnant to his Goodneſs, proceeds from a circumſcription *ſet and chooſe by himſelf, which he cannot tranſgreſs becauſe he will not*, is to introduce an Arbitrary Deity, and very much Derogatory to his ſpotleſs Nature, whoſe Goodneſs, Juſtice and Holineſs are as neceſſary as his Exiſtence; therefore that God cannot act any thing indecorous and unbecoming himſelf, ariſes not from any Reſtraint or Confinement arbitrarily impoſed upon himſelf: but from the neceſſary Perfection of his Nature, and from thoſe Eternal and Immutable laws of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, which are nothing but his own Moral Being. That I may therefore more fully declare the weakneſs and invalidity of this conceit of our Author, *viz. That Arbitrary Power is the ground of Gods Sovereignty and Dominion over his Creatures,*

tures, I ſhall endeavour to enervate thoſe Propoſitions, by which he would ſtrengthen and confirm it.

1. Firſt then (ſayes he *page* 5.) *God has Power either utterly to deſtroy our Beings, or to inflict upon us ſo many calamities as ſhall leave us in a condition only preferable to that of Non-Exiſtence* ——

When we ſpeak of God, our conceptions of him ought to be Generous and Noble; and we ought to look upon him as an Eternal Rectitude and Perfection, who never acts any thing but in conformity to his own bleſſed and righteous Nature. Now that pregnant Womb which brought forth the whole Creation, being Infinite Goodneſs by *Axiome* III. it will follow, that the ſame Goodneſs is infinitely concerned to keep in Being the productions of it's own fertile Nature; for though it be true, that our very Beings, are the iſſues of Infinite Power: yet it is as certain, that this Power is ſurrounded with Immenſe Goodneſs, which from the Reaſons of it's own Nature, will infallibly do all that Good which at any time lies in it's Power to do, and is conſiſtent with the Nature and Capacities of the ſubject, about which it is exerciſed. Since then Being is better then Not-being, and all Creatures capable of

of an Eternal Duration, as well of continuing one day or year, Infinite Goodneſs is obliged to keep all things in Being. The further proof of this ſhall be ſhewed anon. I might here likewiſe ſuggeſt to Mr. *P.* that Things are the bleſſed emanations of Gods exuberant Goodneſs, and depend upon him as emanative effects upon their cauſes; nor will this be invalidated by Objecting, *That then God could not properly be ſaid to have Created the World; For beſides that* Aquinas *himſelf defines Creation by* Actus Emanativus, *there is no Incongruity* (ſay they) *to affirme, that all things are the Emanative effects of Gods pregnant Goodneſs; becauſe, to Create is nothing but to give Being or Exiſtence to things; and this is true, though every thing be an Emanative effect of Gods Life and Eſſential Vigour.* This I look upon to be as Rational and Concinnous an Hypotheſis, as that wherein Mr. *P.* attributes ſuch a Sovereignty and Dominion of God over his Creatures (the baſis of which is Unlimited Power) as that he may at any time either annihilate them, or inflict upon them ſo many calamities as ſhall render their conditions only preferable to Non-Exiſtence.

2. His

2. His ſecond Propoſition is only a further Enlargement and Explication of his firſt; *For if God* (ſayes he) *have an Abſolute Power over an innocent Perſons life, and all it's appendant Priviledges to take them away, he may certainly do the ſame upon any occaſion. Thus he viſits the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, by bringing their Poſterity into thoſe evil circumſtances, into which he might have brought them by vertue of his Supreme Dominion; though not only themſelves, but their Progenitors had been faultleſs.*

To which I anſwer, That there is no inſtance in Scripture, wherein God puniſhes an innocent Perſon by vertue of his Supreme Dominion. 'Tis true, when God inflicts Calamities upon the Children for their Parents faults, the Poſterity are innocent of thoſe particular Crimes of their Progenitors which cauſed the Judgment or Calamity; but they were criminal otherwiſe, and therefore if God take away their lives, it is upon this account, that they have rendred themſelves obnoxious by their Perſonal faults, and by that Oeconomy, ſerves other deſigns of his Providence. Wherefore when God takes away the life of a Virtuous Son to puniſh a Wicked Father, it is not properly to be

be accounted an Evil to the Son, becauſe Gods righteous Providence compenſates it with a greater Good. See *Axiome* VI. From theſe particular inſtances, he deſcends to the conſideration of Original ſin, which he places in nothing but in the evil and irregular *craſis* and temperament of our bodies, which Puniſhment might have been inflicted upon us, though *Adam* had never ſinned: But

1. Can this ſute with the eternal Righteouſneſs of the juſt Governour of the World, to Create Intellectual Beings, holy and good; and then without any fault of theirs, to thruſt them into ſuch cadaverous bodies, where they ſhall be almoſt neceſſitated to trade with Hell and Damnation, and it may be never recover themſelves from that Lethargick ſtate of ſin and vice, or regain their ancient and virtuous freedom? And though Mr. *P.* ſhift this off upon *Adam*'s Prevarication and Tranſgreſſion; yet he ſayes, *The Conſideration of Gods Sovereignty and Dominion, will warrant ſuch an Act upon guiltleſs Perſons.* Sure Mr. *P.* has a very mean conceit of Gods moſt Bleſſed Nature, if he think thoſe beautiful Daughters of Heaven, the ſouls of men, can be thus murder'd by thoſe Benign Hands that firſt gave them life:

Had he conſidered that glorious beauty, wherewith the ſoul of Man was once poſſeſſed, and of which now that ſhe is born into the World ſhe retains but a very ſlender memory, converſing with it as it were in a Dream, and beholding a glimpſe of it through the cranies of Mortality, and had he beheld this Eternal Pulchritude thrown from it's Celeſtial Manſion, and all thoſe living rayes of Virtue, and efflorescences of Divinity plunged into an obſcure and dull piece of Earth, and that by the Bleſſed Author of all things; he could not but infinitely reſent ſuch an harſh Act.

2. Are not all our faculties very much depraved and vitiated, inſomuch that there is in us a natural proclivity to Vice, and we dayly make choice of forbidden inſtances? Are not our Underſtandings very dark and blind, our Wills refractory and ſtubborn, and our Affections violent and head-ſtrong for the moſt part in the proſecution of baſe and unworthy objects? And if this be our Caſe as we come into the World, as certainly it is, and much worſe, Original ſin muſt be a real depravity of our ſouls, and not an ill temperament of our bodies.

The

The Author having determined the Meaſure and Extent of Gods Sovereignty and Dominion, according to his own fancy and humour, he endeavours *page* 25. to frame ſuch an *Idea* of Divine Goodneſs as may correſpond with the Notion he hath pitched upon of Gods Dominion, and therefore he tells us, That *the* Idea *of God conſiſts mainly in his Dominion and Sovereignty, and that the Notion of him in Scripture never refers to his Eſſence, but always to his Power and Empire* —— But he muſt give me leave to take the ſame liberty in rejecting ſo bold an Aſſertion, that he does in obtruding it upon the World; however, I ſhall be ſo fair and candid to him, as not to contradict what he ſayes, without ſhewing him a Reaſon for it: The moſt conſiſtent *Idea* that we can frame of God is, That he is a Being endued with Abſolute Perfection; now there are no Perfections in the Deity, but what may be referred to theſe three, Infinite Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power, which being not of equal worth and excellency by *Axiome* II. it will follow, That what is moſt pretious, is likewiſe moſt active and energetical, and therefore muſt be the ſtandard and meaſure of all the reſt, by *Axiome* III. and IV. Wherefore, when

we frame any Notion, or make any Repreſentation of God, Reaſon it ſelf will tell us, That we ought to expreſs him by that which is moſt pretious and Sovereign in him, which is not *Will* and *Power*, but *Perfect Goodneſs*. And methinks the Scripture mightily favours this, 1 *John* iv. 16. *God is Love*, ſayes the Apoſtle; which Notion, if it refer not to Gods *Moral Eſſence*, I am ſure it hath no relation to his *Power* and *Empire*. It is true, when the *Jews* dwelt under a *Theocracy*, and God went forth as their Captain againſt their Enemies, he owned the Title of the Lord of Hoſts, and the Expreſſions of his Sovereign Power, Majeſty and Dominion, were more frequent: but when the Evangelical Oeconomy was ſet on foot, God laid aſide theſe Titles, and now he expreſſes himſelf by no other Attributes but what carry abundance of ſweetneſs along with them, and wholly refer and lead us to the conſideration of that which is the Flower and Summity of his Being, that is, *Love*. Therefore I may ſubjoyn Mr. *P*'s. own
Pag. 26. words with a little Tranſpoſition, *That no Property which complies not with Goodneſs, can be attributed to God, and conſequently that that's a falſe Notion of his Dominion that interferes with his Goodneſs.*

Let

Let us ſee now how he confutes the *Platoniſts*, with whom he is very angry for aſſerting, *That God being Infinite Goodneſs, will neceſſarily do that which is beſt*, *page* 27. His firſt Argument to prove the falſity of this Poſition he ſets down *page* 29, 30. *&c.* the ſum of which in brief is this, *That the neceſſity of Infinite Wiſdom doing that which is beſt, takes away the liberty and freedom of the Divine Will.* To which I anſwer, That the liberty of the Divine Will conſiſts not in an Arbitrary Indifferency of acting or not acting; but in acting alwayes ſutably and conformablely to his own Infinite Rectitude and Perfection: As the true Excellency and Freedom of our wills conſiſts not in an indifferency or dubious ſuſpenſion between Good and Evil (for this is a debility and imperfection in us) but in a conſtant Election of that which Right Reaſon and Intellect propound to them as Beſt: So that when once that Eternal Providence which ſent us down upon Earth, ſhall reinſtate us in the Poſſeſſion of our Native Glory, our Wills which ſhall then obtain their freedom in it's greateſt latitude and dimenſions, yet ſhall not be left to a bare Indifferency: but will as certainly adhere to that which is Good, as a wiſe and 1.

prudent man will alwayes give the ſame judgment of the ſame thing in the ſame circumſtances. Wherefore to anſwer in ſhort, I ſay, that Gods actions are not ſo fatal and neceſſary as the motions of an *Automa'on* or *Engine*, becauſe he is endued with an Energetical Power of Reaſon and Intellect; but are free and unconſtrained by any external Principle: but becauſe his Nature is infinitely Good, it will alwayes do that which is Beſt, becauſe Goodneſs is the chief and firſt active Principle in it. The proof of this lies in *Axiome* II. III. IV.

2. His ſecond Argument is this, *That if the Divine Goodneſs or Beneficence be neceſſary, it would then deſtroy it's own Nature, becauſe 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to the Nature of Beneficence, that it proceed from a free and elective Principle*, *pag.* 33.

I ſuppoſe this Argument is only caſt in as a ſurpluſage, and not with any intent to convince any of his Readers, unleſs Mr. *P.* imagine them ſo unwary and credulous as to be impoſed upon by fallacies and ſophiſms; For if by Gods Bounty and Beneficence, he mean his gracious Donations and Benefits a-

bove

bove what may render his Creatures happy in their ſeveral ſtates and capacities; then, I ſay, it is moſt free, becauſe when any Beings have forfeited their Felicity, God is not obliged to reinſtate them in all the circumſtances of it again: But if we take Bounty or Goodneſs for the Eternal Perfection of Gods Bleſſed Nature, whereby he communicates himſelf to all capable receptacles, this is as neceſſary as his Being: and againſt this Mr. *P.* ought properly to have levell'd his Argument. Nor does this make the Divine Goodneſs ever a whit the leſs Moral, becauſe then none of Gods actions would be capable of Being Morally Good; for this impoſſible and blaſphemous to aſſert, That the Divine Will is indifferent either to Good or Evill. God doth neceſſarily Love himſelf as the higheſt and moſt Abſolute Good, and cannot but embrace every thing that is like himſelf; nor is the Divine Will Indifferent either to Love or Hate it's own Image and Similitude. And if the Communications of the Divine Goodneſs to ſuch Beings as bear his Impreſſes upon them, and never defiled themſelves with the leaſt contagion of ſin and vice be not neceſſary, then

he is left free to deſtroy them, and conſequently he can deſtroy ſomething of his own Life and Nature, which no ſober Perſon will affirm. And if this Hypotheſis of his be true, I know no ground Mankind can have (ſetting aſide thoſe Declarations God hath made of himſelf in Holy Scripture) to believe and truſt in him, and depend upon him for the advancement of their happineſs after Death. But we find the ſober and wiſe Heathens, who believed the ſoul of man to be ξωογονῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ, and ἀθανάτοις ὡμώνυμον, as *Hermes* and *Plato* ſpeak, conſtantly relying upon the Almighty Goodneſs of God, which they confidently believed did alwayes that which was Beſt, and thence became aſſured and raiſed a ſtrong foundation for their hopes, that it ſhould go well with them in the other World, and that that Eternal Providence would take their better parts into it's tutelage and care, when they laid down their bodies in their beds of Earth.

I haſten now to diſpatch his laſt Argument, which is this:

3. *If the Exertions of the Divine Goodneſs be neceſſary, God can never act otherwiſe;*

wiſe; but that he frequently does, is manifeſt in all the Inſtances of his Anger and Severity, which not only Reaſon, but Scripture oppoſes to Benignity ——

To which I return,

That Gods anger and ſeverity are only ſeveral modifications of his Goodneſs, which is not alwayes diſplayed and manifeſted after the ſame manner, becauſe of the different capacities of the ſubjects upon which it is exerciſed, and have no other diſtinction then that of divers Modes of the ſame Subject between one another. And when God makes uſe of thoſe ſharper diſpenſations, they are as neceſſary reſults of his Goodneſs, as his milder and gentler Oeconomy. So that I cannot ſee what Mr. *P.* would evince from this.

I have now ſufficiently tired my ſelf in ſo prolix a Refutation, which yet is not altogether unneceſſary, conſidering that if thoſe Poſitions be true which Mr. *P.* hath laid down, they will enervate all thoſe Arguments I have made uſe of, and render my deſign uſeleſs, which is no other then to beget in mens minds the moſt noble and generous Conceptions

ceptions of God, to promote real Piety and Religion, by ſhewing a true *Idea* of God, and declaring the real intent and purpoſe of the Goſpel, contrary to that Hypocritical and Artificial kind of Religion which many frame to themſelves, thereby to palliate their ſin, and ſtop the mouth of Right Reaſon and Conſcience.

THE END.

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